Chronicles

April 2003

A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

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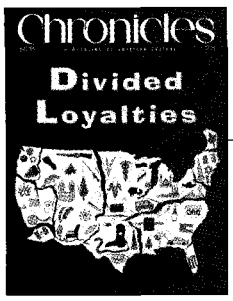

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A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

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On the Mountain Meadows

I was very disappointed to see William Grigg's "Frontier Taliban" (*Reviews*, December 2002) in *Chronicles*. Mr. Grigg either is laughably ignorant of the history of the Mountain Meadows Massacre or is content to promote Will Bagley's agenda, put forth in his book, *Blood of the Prophets: Brigham Young and the Mountain Meadows Massacre*. Mr. Bagley is not quite the "independent researcher" that Mr. Grigg takes him to be, and, as an historian, his facts are often far from the truth.

Mr. Grigg would have us believe that the Mountain Meadows Massacre was the direct result of an order given by Brigham Young and that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints has since been involved in a massive cover-up. These charges are demonstrably false.

Quoting Mr. Bagley, Mr. Grigg writes that "Mormon historians have habitually 'laid the blame on the victims and Indians, and that tradition is alive and well today.'" This is absurd. In 1874, 17 years after the massacre, John Taylor, senior apostle and future president of the church, wrote in a letter to the *Desert News*: "That bloody tragedy has been the chief stock in trade . . . for penny-a-liners, the press, and pulpit, who have gloated in turns, and by chorus over the sickening details. Do you deny it? No. Do you excuse it? No. There is no excuse for such a relentless, diabolical, sanguinary deed. . . . The world is full of deeds of crime and darkness; and a question often arises, who is responsible therfor [*sic*]? It is usual to blame the perpetrators. It does not seem fair to accuse nations, states and communities of deeds perpetrated by some of their citizens, *unless they uphold it* [italics in original]."

Numerous other church authorities denounced the massacre just as strongly. One historian outside the church, H.H. Bancroft, writes in his *History of Utah*, "The 'Mormons' denounce the Mountain Meadows Massacre and every act connected therewith as earnestly and honestly as any in the outside world. This is abundantly proved and may be accepted as a historical fact."

Mr. Bagley is hardly the first to try to discredit the LDS religion by implicating Brigham Young in this heinous affair. According to Senate documents, Jacob Forney, the Indian agent in the territory, wrote: "I fear . . . that with certain parties here there is a greater anxiety to connect Brigham Young and other church dignitaries with every criminal offense than diligent endeavor to punish the actual perpetrators of crime." Mr. Grigg and Mr. Bagley want to show that the minions of Brigham Young were led to commit mass murder by their prophet. Their smoking gun, however, is a third-party journal entry stating that Young told the Indians to go ahead with the massacre. This is highly doubtful. The Paiute chiefs left Salt Lake City on September 2. The Fancher party didn't even arrive at Mountain Meadows until after the chiefs had left for Salt Lake. The Mountain Meadows Massacre started on September 7. Mountain Meadows is 250 miles from Salt Lake City. It is highly implausible that the Paiutes could have covered this great distance and arranged the massacre within this time frame.

For a link between Brigham Young and the white settlers, Grigg relies on the memoir of John D. Lee, who, in 1877, the year he was executed for his participation at the massacre, wrote that "some one in authority" had ordered it. By 1877, Brigham Young had long since learned of Lee's participation, had excommunicated him from the church, and a jury including some Mormons had convicted him of murder. If Lee was telling the truth, why did the settlers send a messenger to Brigham Young when the Indians started the hostilities on September 6? Why, according to the *Deseret News*, was Brigham Young's reply: "Go with all speed, spare no horse flesh. The emigrants must not be meddled with, if it takes all Iron county to prevent it. They must go free and unmolested"? In the years following the massacre, some participants sent letters of confession to Brigham Young. To one, he replied: "If you want a remedy, a rope around the neck taken with a jerk would be very salutary. There are courts of law and officers in the Territory. Appeal to them. . . . God will judge this matter and on that assurance I rest perfectly satisfied. If you are innocent, you may safely do the same, if you are guilty, better try the remedy."

Finally, Parley P. Pratt was not sealed to Eleanor McLean. He was trying to get

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Mrs. McLean's children back from the husband whom she had left. He was acquitted by a non-Mormon jury of any wrongdoing and was subsequently killed by Mr. McLean. News of this had not reached Salt Lake City, and it was not a factor in the Mountain Meadows Massacre.

I wonder if Mr. Grigg knows that Mr. Bagley is a self-identified ex-Mormon who, at a conference for ex-Mormons, said: "I'd like to thank the church for providing so much publicity for my book." He's about as "independent" a researcher as Morris Dees is when he writes about *Chronicles*.

The most plausible explanation for the Mountain Meadows Massacre is found in B.H. Roberts' *A Comprehensive History of the Church Century One*. His conclusion was that some of the Fancher party had inflamed the Indians and the Mormons through their behavior on their journey through Utah. Some had claimed to be part of the mob that had killed Joseph Smith and said they would bring reinforcements back from California to finish the job of destroying the Mormons. When the Indians started the hostilities, the émigrés sent a party of three men to town to get help. There was a problem, and one of the émigrés was killed by a white settler. The other two returned. Knowing that the U.S. government was coming from the east and fearing that the Fancher party would continue to California and bring back others to avenge this death, the settlers mercilessly decided to kill all of them and then took an oath of secrecy. At first, the Indians were blamed, and Brigham Young accepted this explanation. But the truth slowly started to leak out, and investigations revealed what had really happened. Brigham Young wanted the U.S. government to investigate, but President Buchanan had issued a blanket pardon. While the Mormons were not eager to acknowledge that some of their own had participated in this heinous affair, they did not blame the victims nor attempt to exonerate the guilty.

—Kevin Rudd
Los Angeles, CA

Mr. Grigg Replies:

In dealing with commentators and analysts who expose Islamic terrorism, the Council on American-Islamic Relations has accused them of pursuing an "Islamophobic agenda." For several years, CAIR used this tactic to marginalize those who warned about the threat from radical Islam—a threat which proved all too real. While Mormonism obviously poses no similar threat today, the Mormon Church and its apologists are using tactics similar to CAIR's in dealing with Will Bagley's exposé of the terrorist atrocity called the Mountain Meadows Massacre.

Mr. Rudd is wrong to refer to Mr. Bagley as a "self-identified ex-Mormon"; the author readily describes himself as a Mormon, albeit an inactive one. And, as disappointing as it may be to defenders of Mormonism who cling desperately to what Bagley calls the "myth of persecuted innocence," there is no evidence that Bagley is connected to some vast anti-Mormon conspiracy.

In Rudd's depiction, Brigham Young was shocked and revolted by the massacre, which he had frantically tried to prevent. That characterization is difficult to square with Young's actions on visiting the massacre site two years later. In the interval, a crude memorial to the victims had been constructed, marked with a cross bearing the scriptural admonition: "Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord; I will repay." As recorded by Mormon apostle (and future president) Wilford Woodruff, who was present, Young took offense at the inscription, snorting contemptuously: "I should say, 'Justice is mine, and I have taken some.'" He then ordered his subordinates to tear down the cross and desecrate the cairn containing the victims' remains. This was hardly the act of someone whose gentle soul was rent with anguish over the death of 120 innocent people.

In my review, I took note of John D. Lee's excommunication. This occurred in 1870, 13 years after the massacre, long after Lee's role was known by Brigham Young. The timing of Lee's excommunication suggests that it was inspired by expedience rather than principle. And, as I noted, Mormon leaders posthumously restored Lee's membership and "priesthood blessings" in 1961. In Mormon theology, this could not be done for someone guilty of "shedding innocent blood," which is regarded as an unforgivable sin. By rehabilitating Lee, Mormon leaders tacitly—but unmistakably—recognized that he had taken the fall for "those in authority," as his descendants had long insisted.

Rudd maintains that charges of a Mormon cover-up are "demonstrably false." How, then, does he account for the curiously selective absence of key documents—journals, minutes of meetings, and critical correspondence—that could illuminate the truth of what happened in September 1857? Richard Turley, an historian employed by the Mormon Church, has admitted the cover-up, acknowledging that "some documents of importance were sequestered . . . and kept from researchers."

It is not necessary to believe that Brigham Young personally ordered the massacre to hold him responsible for it. Bancroft's *History of Utah*, which Mr. Rudd apparently considers reliable, relates Young's threat to Army Captain Van Vliet that, if Washington insisted on installing a new territorial governor in Utah, "I shall not hold the Indians by the wrist any longer. . . . If the issue comes, you may tell the government to stop all emigration across the continent, for the Indians will kill all who attempt it." That threat was made on September 9, 1857—two days before the slaughter at Mountain Meadows.

Bagley makes a compelling case that the murder of Parley P. Pratt was known in Utah before September 1857. The case that Pratt had "married" Eleanor McLean is circumstantial but quite plausible. Rudd insists that Pratt had angered Eleanor's lawful husband, Hector, by "trying to get Mrs. McLean's children back" from him, but doesn't explain why the couple was estranged and why Pratt considered the McLeans' domestic affairs any of his business.

According to Bancroft (whom, again, Rudd considers reliable), while the McLeans were living in San Francisco, Hector McLean ordered Pratt to cease his missionary visits. Pratt heedlessly persisted in his efforts to convert McLean's wife, and, at one point, Hector reportedly found intimate letters from the Mormon apostle in his wife's possession. Bancroft states that it was "alleged by anti-Mormon writers, and tacitly admitted by the saints, that [Pratt] was sealed to Hector McLean's wife." At the very least, Pratt's conduct—alienating the affections of Hector McLean's legal wife and defying Hector's authority over his own household—was arrogant and morally suspect.

The murder of Pratt—like those of Joseph and Hyrum Smith before him—was a crime. The theocratic doctrines of mid-19th-century Mormonism turned those crimes into a rationale for terrorism and mass murder. If the Mormon Church ever candidly confronts these tragic facts, it will be because of the principled, persistent work of honest historians such as Will Bagley.

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After Iraq

As soon as the long-anticipated war with Iraq has been brought to a temporary close, the United States will be able to get on with the post-September 11 agenda declared by President Bush: the eradication of evil. Even a minimal definition of *evil* would include the acts of terrorism inflicted every day by Islamic extremists against the West and its allies. No war against Islamic terrorism will accomplish much, however, if it is not accompanied by an honest evaluation of the reasons why Muslims around the world look upon the United States as the enemy.

Part of this hatred may be inevitable: the hatred of the have-nots for the haves, of the defeated for the victors. But some of the antipathy expressed not just by terrorists but by traditional Muslims stems from what they perceive as American arrogance. Not content with boasting of our superior firepower and greater wealth, our leaders and pundits, whenever they speak on the subject, claim that people in traditional societies envy our freedom and our way of life; that Muslims, in particular, hate us because of our moral and cultural superiority and not because of anything we have ever done wrong. Such rhetoric is as insulting as it is false. Like other Western countries, the United States is undergoing a moral crisis whose dimensions are measured by the rates of divorce, abortion, drug use, television watching, and suicide.

It is time for Americans to turn the volume down on our self-glorification and to consider what lies within our power. If we really want to succeed, not just in killing terrorists but in reducing the level of hatred in the Muslim world, we shall have to deal with one of the primary causes of that hatred: the festering conflict between Israel and the Palestinians. Only the United States, with her great wealth and preponderant military forces, has the necessary authority to bring peace to the Middle East, and if, as is likely, the second Gulf War is quickly and successfully prosecuted, the next president—either George W. Bush (reelected against whatever token opposition the Democrats finally put up) or someone who promises to put Americans back to work and to save their pensions—had better return to the most important piece of unfinished business left behind by George Bush I and Bill Clinton. This is what The Rockford Institute team was told by Shai Feldman, director of the prestigious Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies at Tel Aviv University, when we visited at the end of February.

It is not the task of a foreign government (much less a magazine) to dictate the terms of a settlement. Israel is a sovereign state, possessed of the right of all sovereign states, which is to protect her own interests. However, Israel's excessive dependence on U.S. support (of which the billions spent in foreign aid may be the smallest part) has given our government enormous power, which we have not always used wisely. Before entering, once again, into the perilous waters of the peace process, any U.S. administration should keep in mind a few essential points.

First, Israel is here to stay, and it is entirely unreasonable to demand that any Israeli government sacrifice her security interests. So long as the Palestinians continue to practice terrorism against women and children, no Israeli government will be able to negotiate. Israel might never have existed were it not for the terrorist activities of people like Menachem Begin and Itzhak Shamir, but (as the hawkish Efraim Inbar of the Begin-Sadat Center explained to us), Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion's decision to shoot Israeli terrorists proved the legitimacy of the Israeli state. Now, it is the Palestinians' turn. Until they find a substitute for the thoroughly discredited Yasser Arafat, however, negotiations will be impossible. The same may be said of Ariel Sharon. Although some Israelis continue to hope that Sharon, as an extreme hawk, will have the necessary credibility to make concessions, his record of brutality and deliberately provocative style may make his removal a *sine qua non* of the peace process.

The model for an agreement should not be the Versailles Treaty, which ended World War I and started World War II, but the practical negotiations that enabled Anwar Sadat and Menachem Begin to come to an agreement. On that occasion, Begin's decision to withdraw Jewish settlements from the Sinai was the key to the treaty's success, and any future agreement will require an Israeli withdrawal from some, but by no means all, of the West Bank settlements. Virtually everyone in Israel acknowledges that a Palestinian state, in some form, is the only possible guarantee of Israel's security. The alternative is to sit back and wait for the high Palestinian birthrate to accomplish what three wars and numberless uprisings have failed to achieve.

A second prerequisite for peace is that the parties must eschew utopian and religious dreams. The Palestinian exiles, who still brandish the keys to their old houses and are deliberately kept in a state of despair, are the most unyielding obstacle to peace. They must simultaneously be offered cause for hope—opportunities for citizenship, education, a normal life somewhere in the Arab world—and told plainly that they will never return to occupy Israel. On the other hand, American evangelicals, with their newfangled millennialist theories that justify the infinite expansion of Israel, must be firmly excluded from all political influence, both over Israel and over U.S. foreign policy.

For their part, Israelis had better understand that American support is neither unqualified nor unlimited. The day will come, and it may come all too soon, when ordinary American voters, tired of apparently endless carnage, will force their government to abandon Israel just as it abandoned other allies, such as the Diems of South Vietnam, Marcos in the Philippines, the Somozas in Nicaragua, and the shah of Iran. Israel's destiny should be in the hands of Israelis and not in those of American politicians and religious eccentrics.

Peace will not come with a bang to the Middle East, for, in Yeats' words, "peace comes dropping slow." It will require the painful efforts of men who have learned not to trust one another but know that, if they fail to proceed cautiously, it may mean the destruction of Israelis and Palestinians alike and a *jihad* against the United States of which September 11, 2001, was only a foretaste.

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WAR WITH IRAQ loomed large as I was flying home to my district on February 6, reading glowing reports in the *Washington Times* of Secretary of State Colin Powell's speech to the United Nations the day before. Then, I turned the page and read these words from Canadian Trade Minister Pierre Pettigrew: "I'm hearing a lot of things about the United States, . . . a lot of anti-Americanism, stronger than I've heard in the past, and that worries me a great deal." He made these remarks at the Woodrow Wilson International Center in Washington.

Just a little over three weeks earlier, I had made my first visit to Australia, with a U.S. congressional delegation. When I arrived on January 13, I opened that day's *Sydney Herald* and found nine letters opposed to war with Iraq and none in favor. Adam Lyons, for example, wrote: "When our [Australian] servicemen go overseas this time it will be with the clear interest to plunder Iraq. It will not be to make the world a safer place; it will not be to protect a threatened nation." While I do not believe U.S. troops intend to plunder Iraq, this letter is typical of the depth of feeling in many other countries.

That same day, the Sydney *Australian* carried a column by Gabriel Kolko, research professor emeritus at York University in Toronto. Professor Kolko wrote: "Things go wrong for every great nation whose ambitions exceed its power and reality, and the U.S. is no exception."

During our stay in Australia, we met with the U.S. ambassador, a very nice man who once ran the Texas Rangers for a group of owners that included George W. Bush. Our ambassador said that the Australian government was "ahead of the people" in supporting the war and that it was "very heavy lifting" and a "hard sell" for him and the Howard government to convince Australians to go along with it.

The nonpartisan *National Journal* magazine claimed, in its December 21, 2002, issue, that "signs of resistance to U.S. foreign policy leadership are growing, as is widespread resentment about the long shadow the American Goliath casts across the globe." Columnist William Schneider wrote: "Throughout the Middle East, anti-Americanism has grown along with U.S. influence. So what has really changed in the Middle East since 1991? The United States is in a stronger position strategically and a weaker position politically. The lesson: Great power breeds great resentment."

Even in South Korea, which the United States has defended for many years, anti-Americanism "deepens," according to the *Washington Post*, and *Newsweek* wrote that "anti-U.S. protests have drawn thousands . . ." On February 9, *60 Minutes* ran a segment about this growing anti-American feeling in South Korea, saying that most South Koreans fear the United States more than they do North Korea, in spite of the fact that our taxpayers spend three billion dollars per year to "protect" them.

The *National Journal* article claimed that these anti-American sentiments are "deeply rooted and intensely held" throughout the world, even in Europe and South America.

I gain no pleasure from writing about anti-Americanism. In fact, it is precisely because I love my country that I point out the problems that our interventionist foreign policy is causing for us around the world.

During his campaign, George W. Bush argued that the United States needs a more "humble" foreign policy. I agree. In recent years, U.S. taxpayers have spent hundreds of billions of dollars on foreign countries, and no other nation has even come close to doing as much for others as ours has.

Why, then, do so many dislike us? I believe it is because we have involved ourselves in far too many religious, ethnic, and political conflicts around the globe. We gave money to Saddam Hussein in the 1980's and Osama bin Laden in the 90's. And we ended up fighting people we had supported in the former Yugoslavia.

President Eisenhower warned us many years ago about the military-industrial complex. He would be shocked by how far we have gone down that path.

Many multinational corporations promote a hawkish foreign policy through donations to think tanks and elected officials and payments to lobbyists. They reap huge profits even during—or, perhaps, *especially* during—unnecessary wars.

Now, as Chris Matthews said on *Hardball*, the American people are being "herded into war" against Iraq. Iraq is a third-rate power whose total military budget is approximately $1.4 billion, less than three tenths of one percent of ours. Her manpower and weaponry is less than 40 percent of what it was at the time of the first Gulf War, when her troops surrendered to camera crews or anyone else who would take them.

A swift U.S. victory is about as certain as anything can be. However, the Congressional Budget Office has warned that even a short war followed by a five-year occupation will cost American taxpayers $272 billion. And, even if Hussein backs down, we have already spent billions moving troops, planes, ships, and equipment into the region.

Those who favor this war have conducted a masterful p.r. campaign to convince the American public that the only ones who oppose it are peacenik leftists. In a White House briefing, however, I told National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice and CIA Director George Tenet that conservatives have traditionally opposed the notion that the United States should be the world's policeman and have been against huge deficit spending.

It is also a traditional conservative belief that it is unfair to the U.S. taxpayers and to our servicemen to require them to carry almost the entire burden of enforcing U.N. resolutions.

Charley Reese, whom C-SPAN viewers selected as their favorite columnist, may have summed it up best when he wrote that a U.S. attack on Iraq "is a prescription for the decline and fall of the American empire. Overextension—urged on by a bunch of rabid intellectuals who wouldn't know one end of a gun from another—has doomed many an empire. Just let the United States try to occupy the Middle East, which will be the practical result of a war against Iraq, and Americans will be bled dry by the costs both in blood and treasure."

—Rep. John J. Duncan

VLADIMIR PUTIN, during his February trip to Germany and France, surprised Kremlin watchers east and west by threatening to veto any U.S.- or U.K.-sponsored resolution on military action against Iraq. In Paris, Putin told reporters that, if a resolution on the "unreasonable use of force" against Baghdad were made "today," Mos-

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cow "would act with France or alone" to block it. He subsequently repeated the warning, calling it a "grave error" for the United States, which was threatening to act without the approval of the U.N. Security Council, to move against Iraq "outside of international law." Putin had earlier endorsed a proposal made by France and Germany to intensify U.N. weapons inspections as an alternative to war.

It is one thing for Moscow to endorse such a plan, while allowing France and Germany to take the political heat from the United States. (Indeed, Washington did not appear to blame Russia for the proposal.) It is quite another, however, for the Kremlin to risk a direct confrontation with the Bush White House, something Putin had studiously avoided since Moscow declared itself an American ally in the War on Terror.

By pledging to aid Washington's War on Terror, Moscow had dramatically shifted the focus of its foreign policy, which had previously emphasized reestablishing ties to Soviet-era allies in the Middle East and Asia. Since then, the Kremlin has gone along with the Bush administration's decisions to withdraw from the ABM Treaty, to increase the U.S. presence in Central Asia and the Trans-Caucasus (Western firms are discussing pipeline routes for transporting the regions' oil and gas through Pakistan and Georgia, while U.S. military advisors are training Georgian troops, and Georgia is contemplating joining NATO), and to support NATO expansion to Russia's Western border.

Moscow had appeared to accept Washington's planned "regime change" in Baghdad in exchange for assurances that Russian economic interests in Iraq would be protected. In addition, Washington put a Chechen lobbying group on its blacklist of terrorist organizations, and Secretary of State Colin Powell acknowledged that the Chechen separatists were cooperating with Osama bin Laden's terrorist network. President Bush further advised Congress to forego Soviet-era Jackson-Vanik trade restrictions on Russia (which are renewed or lifted yearly). Moreover, many Russian observers say the February partnership deal between British Petroleum (BP) and Russia's TNK oil firm is, as one observer put it, a "down payment" on the economic payoff to Russia for her unspoken agreement to regime change in Iraq.

Judging by the recent actions of Washington and London, it appeared that both fully expected that Russia would not seriously attempt to block military action against Iraq. Russia would publicly criticize any rush to war, of course, but would not veto any U.S.-sponsored U.N. Security Council resolution. And, in late January, Putin even hinted that Russia might agree to a new U.S.-backed resolution on Iraq, stating that, "If Iraq begins to make problems for the work of the [U.N.] inspectors, then Russia may change its position and agree with the United States on the development of different, tougher UN Security Council decisions."

So what changed between late January and mid-February, when Putin made his threats?

One theory is that Moscow may not have gotten all it wanted from Washington and London and is merely upping the ante, seeing the French-German proposals as an opportunity to pressure the Atlantic alliance while enhancing Russia's international status by taking on the role of arbiter between "Old Europe" and the Washington-London axis. (Exploiting divisions among the Western powers was an old Soviet game.) This theory, however, does not explain why Putin would be so brash as to risk a direct confrontation with the Bush White House. It would have been enough simply to endorse the inspection plan put forth by France and Germany: Washington surely would have gotten the message and reopened talks with Moscow. Meanwhile, Putin would have been courted by the continental European powers. Moscow had already helped to entangle Washington with the U.N. Security Council, something that the Kremlin has wanted since last fall, when the wrangling over Iraq began.

Putin's actions, however, may stem from internal Russian politics, which most Western observers consistently ignore. Putin's cooperation with the Bush administration has been very much in line with the interests of the Boris Yeltsin "family" and its allies, who have backed Putin's presidency. This elite's leading lights have accumulated vast fortunes through Russian oil exports—and many of the oil oligarchs plan to break into the American market. Media sources connected to these factions have consistently taken a pro-American line and have been enthusiastic about the Kremlin's cooperation in the War on Terror. Putin, some Kremlin watchers claimed, would facilitate the oligarchs' projected American deals and, thus, guarantee his reelection in March 2004.

There may, however, be a pothole on Putin's road to victory: The family and its allies may be planning to dump him. In January and February, various Russian media sources and political figures began hinting that Putin may not (or should not) run for a second term. Vladimir Zhirinovsky, an ultranationalist politician and a favorite Kremlin vehicle for floating political trial balloons, claimed that Putin may not run again. Subsequently, articles began appearing in influential, elite-oriented newspapers, complaining of "stagnation" under Putin and warning that Russian voters were growing tired of Yeltsin's successor.

It is not clear why the family and its allies may have soured on Putin, though the ex-KGB officer has, at times, attempted to assert his independence from the Yeltsin clan, who many Kremlinologists believe to be blackmailing the Russian president, securing their own safety from competing clans and assuring Putin's loyalty. Nevertheless, signs of the family's designs for an early retirement for the 50-year-old president were evident early this year.

Thus, Putin may have tilted away from Washington in reaction to the family's plans: His likely alternative sources of support would be found among a group of oligarchs who are not well connected in America (and, thus, less able to exploit possible deals with U.S. oil firms) or among the major remaining state-controlled oil companies, such as Rosneft, which have often clashed with Yeltsin-connected private firms and have maintained friendlier ties to Saddam Hussein's regime. Moreover, there are probably elements in the Russian military and security apparatus that are less than enthusiastic about increasing American influence in the former Soviet Union. Putin's U.N.-veto threats might have been a desperate fishing expedition, with Putin hoping to get a few bites from those elite factions unhappy with Yeltsin and his family's continuing dominance over Russia's postcommunist political and economic system.

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By the time you read this, the United States may have either secured U.N. support for a war on Iraq or acted unilaterally. In either case, Russia's behavior could tell the Bush administration what is going on in the Kremlin and what to expect from Russia in the future. Whether Putin stays or goes if is of far less importance.

—*Wayne Allensworth*

CELEBRITIES—America's "creative community"—start getting agitated whenever the country is on the verge of war. They march in antiwar rallies; they publish antiwar ads and petitions; and, most significantly, they don antiwar clothing.

Well, it's a free country, and I can abide the speeches, the petitions, and the ads, even when they are imbued with that unique celebrity combination of self-satisfaction and terror of being thought airheads. What is hard to take, however, is the protest clothing.

USA Today recently ran a piece, accompanied by photographs, on antiwar T-shirts and the celebrities who wear them. The article began with the glib prose that is the trademark of entertainment reporting: "As war looms with Iraq, some celebrities are trading their designer duds for anti-war garb." Among those mentioned was singer Sheryl Crow, who appeared at a recent event in a shirt that was, according to the paper, covered across the chest "with the message 'War Is Not The Answer' in sequins." For the record, the shirt surrounding the sequins was tight, tiny, and low-cut. Also featured was actress Shiva Rose, who went public in "a blue T-shirt with the slogan 'No Blood For Oil' in red letters by designer Hayley Star."

It is easy to understand why, when it comes to politics, celebrities fear not being taken seriously: They are forever doing things that make it impossible to take them seriously. In reality, neither Crow nor Rose was making a political statement with her slogan-spattered clothing. Instead, both were trying to make a fashion statement while hoping to be credited with political commitment. But if you truly want to communicate that war is not the answer (by the way, what is the question?), you don't do it with sequins stitched across your bustline. (Is there any female adornment—with the possible exception of feathers—that suggests *less* seriousness than sequins?) And if you really believe in the notion of no blood for oil, you don't need a fashion designer to express your thoughts.

All of this seems lost on both the fashion world and the celebrities who inhabit it. Regarding political T-shirts, *USA Today* quoted Lesley Jane Seymour, editor of *Marie Claire* magazine: "You can measure the zeitgeist of the nation with them. It's a cool retro fashion trend and a serious issue." Miss Seymour, of course, has it exactly wrong: It's a cool retro fashion trend *or* a serious issue. It is not the *Zeitgeist* of a nation that is being measured here; it's the *Zeitgeist* of nitwits. Sheryl Crow and Shiva Rose looked ridiculous precisely *because* they combined a fashion trend with a serious issue. While desiring to appear profound, they succumbed to the need to look cool. Vanity: that big U-turn on the Profound Highway of life.

This was especially true in the case of Rose, whose "T-shirt" was actually more of a bib, a skimpy garment that tied under the arms and hung revealingly off one shoulder. She accessorized her outfit with a facial expression of utter solemnity—a requirement, I suppose, when one is dressed in a designer antiwar bib with the word *blood* on it. Most noteworthy, however, was that Rose was not, as *USA Today* stated, doing anything so radical as trading her "designer duds for anti-war garb." In fact, she did no trading at all. Instead, she bought herself some antiwar garb that qualified first as designer duds. Issues of war and peace may be important, but they are no reason for a girl to lower her fashion standards.

Message T-shirts are repellent, whatever the message—and whatever the *Zeitgeist*. They are aggressive and juvenile, which is why they seem to appeal mainly to celebrities and college freshman. No opinion is so interesting that it must come screaming off an article of clothing. In fact, anything printed on a T-shirt, from antiwar sentiments to Bible verses, is trivialized by virtue of its context. Add sequins to the mix, and you go from the trivial to the absurd. You go from the statement "War Is Not The Answer" to the message "War Is Not The Answer And Check Out My Breasts."

If you absolutely must use your clothing as a billboard, however, a little integrity is called for. If Sheryl Crow and Shiva Rose had cared first and only about their political beliefs, they would have taken a Magic Marker to an old Fruit of the Loom and worn *that* in public. It might not have looked cool, but it would have suggested a certain purity of purpose. There are times, the *Zeitgeist* notwithstanding, when it's simply uncool to be cool.

—*Janet Scott Barlow*

OBITER DICTA: With only hours before this issue goes to press, the BBC has reported that Zoran Djindjic, the prime minister of Serbia, has been assassinated. Despite what you may read in press accounts about Djindjic's "pro-reformist," "pro-democracy," "anticorruption" record, his political career was anything but spotless. For a different view of Djindjic's legacy, please read Srdja Trifkovic's "Letter From Belgrade: Privatization in Serbia" on p. 43 of this issue.

We have already begun taking registrations for this year's Summer School (see the inside front cover). Registration is limited, so tarry not and register anon. Last year, the Summer School sold out. Note that returning students may deduct $25.00.

The Rockford Institute's Paris Convivium has sold out. For our next international convivium, we will resurrect our Balkan adventure, which September 11 forced us to postpone. (See the ad on page 31.) If you have any questions about these events, call Christopher Check, executive vice president, at (815) 964-5811.

Our first poet this month is **Catharine Savage Brosman** of New Orleans. Her poetry and prose have appeared in the *New England Review*, the *American Scholar*, the *Southwest Review*, the *Southern Review*, and the *Sewanee Review*, among others. Two collections of her verse, *The Swimmer and Other Poems* (R.L. Barth) and *Places in Mind* (LSU Press), were published in 2001.

Lawrence Dugan, a librarian who lives in Philadelphia, is our second poet. Mr. Dugan's poetry has appeared in numerous national and international publications, including the *New Republic*, *Southern Review*, the *Spectator*, *Encounter*, *Commonweal*, *Tar River Poetry*, *Irish Edition*, *Poetry Australia*, *First Things*, *Modern Age*, and the 20th anniversary issue of *Poetry East*.

Our cover and inside illustrations are provided this month by **Stephen Warde Anderson**, a self-taught artist from Rockford, Illinois. Mr. Anderson is affiliated with the Phyllis Kind Gallery in New York, Dean Jensen Gallery in Milwaukee, Aron Packer and Earth Works Gallery in Chicago, and Webb Gallery in Waxahachie, Texas.

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by Thomas Fleming

Remember From Whence Thou Art Fallen

"Forget about Europe!" shriek the neoisolationists. "Only Britain and Israel matter. We saved the French twice in one century, and they still think they have a right to follow their own foreign policy." Americans used to have somewhat longer memories. When General Pershing arrived in Paris in 1917, his aide and orator declared, "Lafayette, we are here!" not only in remembrance of the Marquis de Lafayette's services during the Revolutionary War but in acknowledgment of the fact (not often recalled) that the French navy and army rescued the American cause at Yorktown. There were, in fact, more French than American troops on the ground when Cornwallis surrendered.

The American victory was important to the French army, whose memories of glory went back to the first half of Louis XIV's disastrous reign, but, under the nationalist governments of the Revolution and the Empire, French arms dominated Europe. French soldiers fought and died bravely in World War I, and, although the nation was too worn out to sustain a second war against Germany, French volunteers in British forces and the soldiers of the Free French, led by the greatest statesman of the 20th century, made a good showing. My late friend Marcel Boisot, an heroic pilot who flew his plane out of Vichy France and crash-landed in Spain, flew many missions for the RAF and was highly decorated by both the British and French governments.

This is the nation of cowards currently being reviled by internationalist leftists who insist on describing themselves as patriotic conservative Americans. Most are none of the above. (How many have ever shot skeet, attended a church picnic, or joined the Boy Scouts?) The ironies do not end with the neoconservatives. Few anti-imperialist or "isolationist" conservatives know how to respond to the call for renewed patriotism. Libertarians can rightly say that they oppose all wars among nations, because they do not believe in nations, not even their own. But what can Pat Buchanan's friends, who for years have been banging the nationalist drum, say in response to the neojingoists?

Few nationalist conservatives, in fact, support the projected war against Iraq, but they ought to be happy with the upsurge of patriotic rhetoric. We know they are not, but why? Surely not because they like Saddam Hussein. The nationalists would say that the war against Saddam is an unjust war, is not in the national interest, and is being undertaken out of a combination of bad motives: greed for Iraqi oil and a desire to protect Israel.

To a true nationalist, however, bad motives should be a small obstacle. "My country, right or wrong" is a nationalist cliché. If the success of the nation is the highest good, then how can it be right to promote divisions within the nation and to undermine the expansion of the nation's power? At a time like this, nationalists would be expected to be found playing on the national team, not coaching from the bleachers. It is difficult for men who have spent their careers despising the ACLU suddenly to deplore the erosion of civil liberties and states' rights over the past year and a half, much less the eruption of vulgar patriotism—the cult of the flag, the Pledge of Allegiance, and the incessant droning of "God Bless America."

The words *nationalism* and *patriotism* are often confused, and, even when political theorists draw a contrast, the result is often a distinction without a difference or a bizarre twist of meaning that defies everyday usage. The modern concept of nationalism (just like the concept of internationalism) took shape during the French Revolution, which implemented Rousseau's theory of the general will and continued the process of centralization inaugurated by the monarchy.

According to 19th-century nationalists, the will of the nation—where *nation* is defined as an historic community of blood and tongue—had to find expression in a common and unified state. Hence, the Italian nationalist Mazzini, whose political lineage went back to the Revolution (by way of Buonarotti, the disciple of Babeuf), spoke always of the twin principles of unity and nationality. Italy presented a special case of a people that had not been unified since the fall of the Western Roman Empire and had been divided up into competing principalities, some of which were controlled by foreign dynasties (*e.g.*, the Bourbons of Naples) and foreign powers, particularly Austria. To liberate and unify Italians in a centralized state was the nationalists' goal, one that naturally overrode all the local patriotisms of Sicilians, Venetians, Latins, and Tuscans—to say nothing of Catholics loyal to the pope, whose estates were rudely stripped away by the French-speaking rulers of Piedmont. That process of unification culminated in the 1860's, when the more developed North conquered and subjugated the agrarian South. The parallel with the American *Risorgimento* did not escape the notice of Pope Pius IX, who regarded Jefferson Davis as a fellow victim of nationalist aggression.

Most 19th-century liberals were sympathetic to patriotic and nationalist movements of liberation and unification, and even archindividualist John Stuart Mill embraced the notion that every distinct nation should have its own state. However, other liberals condemned the nationalist state as spiritually and culturally mortifying. Jacob Burckhardt pointed out that a divided Germany had produced Haydn and Goethe, but the unified nationalist German state was eager only for power, not for civilization, "hence the hopelessness of any attempt at decentralization, of any voluntary restriction of power in favor of local and civilized life."

In England, Lord Acton condemned nationalism as the principle most inimical to human liberty, and he viewed a federal system, such as that of Switzerland or the Holy Roman Empire, as the best solution to ethnic conflict. States built on the national idea were, he argued, too confining to inspire the generous, cosmopolitan civilization that had been characteristic of European man.

If the nationalist standpoint narrows the human outlook, it also implies a willingness to divide the human race into the categories of *us* and *them*, and to define *them* as an enemy to be eliminated or subjugated. This attitude, as George Orwell pointed out, stems from "the habit of assuming that human beings can be classified like insects and that whole blocks of millions or tens of millions of people can be confidently labeled 'good' or 'bad.'" By identifying ourselves with a nation, he

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said, we place the state "beyond good and evil, . . . recognizing no other duty than that of advancing its interests."

Propaganda and ethnic bigotry are the hallmarks of developed nationalism. While soldiers in the two world wars were sometimes willing to look upon one another as human beings, their governments, which enlisted distinguished writers in their propaganda campaigns, were not. The Germans, who were portrayed as savage monsters by the Allies, ridiculed the effeminacy of Britain and France and portrayed Jews and Slavs as subhuman. The United States, in denigrating the Japanese, resorted to the most sordid racial stereotyping. Such propagandistic stereotyping on the part of the U.S. government goes back, at least, to the Civil War, when government and newspapers alike depicted Southerners as cruel and inhuman slave drivers. The propaganda was then used to justify the criminal actions of the Union.

For the most part, however, nationalists do not actually identify themselves with the real and historic country of their birth but with a fictional version. Robespierre's France was the imaginary product of his scheming but uneducated mind, and the Jacobins reinvented French history as the struggle between the subjugated Celts and Frankish invaders who made up the aristocracy. Although the real Germany was divided between Catholics and Protestants, the Nazis' ideal German nation had to be unified, and Hitler was more ready to persecute his family's own Catholic Church, because it divided Germans and made some of them loyal to an international entity.

Rabid nationalism, so far from being a sign of strength, is actually an indication of a weak sense of nationhood. Lincoln's United States, Masaryk's Czechoslovakia, Pavelic's Croatia, and Mussolini's Italy were divided countries in which people were more loyal to their region, their church, or their ethnicity—to anything but the nation.

Modern Zionism, a nationalist movement *par excellence*, flourishes in an Israeli state divided between Jew and non-Jew and, more importantly, between Middle Eastern and European Jews, between ultrazionists and socialists, liberal secularists and the Orthodox who would restore Solomon in all his glory. Their only unity is in national solidarity against the Palestinians and other Muslims, whom extremist rabbis dismiss as Amalekites, a nation to be eliminated. Their hysterical propaganda, repeated by uneducated evangelicals in the United States, is perfectly understandable as a form of nationalist self-reassurance. To describe Zionism, as the Palestinians do, as a form of Nazism is to miss the point entirely: Arabic and Israeli nationalisms were forged in the same European laboratory of revolution. Arafat and Sharon are as alike as Etcocles and Polynices were—twins who fought even in the womb.

The nations adored by nationalists do not actually exist but are something to be realized in the future. The real Israel of downtown Tel Aviv is a far cry from the Zionist dream. Mussolini, it is said, dreamed of changing the Italian climate to harden the character of his people, and, after the war, Italian fascist Giulio Evola openly voiced his contempt for the Mediterranean character of Italians who were happy to abandon the virility of fascism and return to their mandolins and "*O Sole Mio*." Evola thought he wanted to restore the virtues of ancient Rome, little realizing that Romans in the age of Cicero were far closer to the Italians than to the severe characters portrayed by Livy.

From this perspective, Sam Francis and Pat Buchanan are not really nationalists at all: They are patriots, a word that misuse in the mouths of politicians and propagandists has rendered unpalatable and, perhaps, obsolete. In general usage, *patriotism* signifies a person's willingness to take risks and make sacrifices for the sake of his country and his fellow citizens. Although his devotion may spring from an instinctive "devotion to a particular place and a particular way of life," the patriot is not merely loyal to a spot of ground; he is willing to defend it with his life. Patriotism, although it begins in instinct, can also, as Lord Acton advocated, transcend the blood-and-soil passions of primitive man and become an ethical force based on respect for law and the Constitution.

In arguing for a purely ethical patriotism, Lord Acton failed to understand that the stages of human social development can never be transcended; they can only be incorporated into more complex communities. The family was not eliminated by being incorporated into a tribe, and a tribal or provincial identity can only be destroyed at grave peril to the moral health of the people.

Jacobin nationalists established the model. In attempting to build an abstract and artificially unified French nation, they made war on all other, deeper loyalties: They attacked the Church; waged a war of genocide against Catholics in the Vendée; and did their best to obliterate the distinctive ways of life (*e.g.*, in Provence and Brittany) that were responsible for the vitality of French culture. The predictable result in France, Britain, and the United States (to name only three examples) is a mass culture in which the only "national identity" is found in commercial entertainment and state propaganda.

The instinctive loyalty to family and tribe has no name in English or in most European languages. Edmund Burke, however, intuited the concept when he referred to the "little platoons" that command our loyalties. Serbian does have such a word: *rodoljublje*, love of kith and kin, love of the stock (*rod*). The love of kith and kin is based not on race but on language, culture, and tradition; and, while the process of loyalty begins with the family, it culminates in the commonwealth, which fulfills (without superseding) lesser loyalties. *Rodoljublje* does not even require a nation-state. It is possible to be loyal to your own people even when separated—as Serbians, Montenegrins, and the Serbs of Bosnia and Krajina were in the 19th century (or as Greeks were until the Roman conquest). Separate ethnic groups may also be unified in a crown, as the Scots and English were under James VI and I and as the various peoples were under the Holy Roman Empire.

The difficulty comes when a multiethnic monarchy or empire begins to force assimilation, as happened in the waning years of Austria-Hungary, which had degenerated from the more inclusive ideal of the Holy Roman Empire into a dual monarchy. Austria-Hungary's dual nationalism made it difficult, if not impossible, for Slovaks, Croats, and Serbs to preserve their identities. Hungarian nationalists such as Lajos Kossuth portrayed themselves as enlightened patriots interested in the good of humanity, but Kossuth and his allies worked tirelessly to suppress the Slovaks and the Croats who wanted to defend their own identities. This is precisely the effect that all the misguided proposals for a national language or a national cultural would have. Such well-intentioned people as Ron Unz (the scourge of bilingual education in California) think they can douse the multinational fire that is burning up our schools and cultures by pouring on nationalist gasoline. There is no contradiction, as Alain de Benoist explains elsewhere in this issue, in an individualist

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libertarian advocating nationalist measures: The two go hand in hand.

Faced with the erosion of our national sovereignty through unlimited immigration, economic globalism, and political internationalism, some conservatives have taken their stand on the nation-state not only as a last redoubt to be defended (which it is) but as a supernatural entity tied together by "the mystic chords of memory" and presided over by "the better angels of our nature." This sort of nationalism, whether proclaimed by Mazzini or Lincoln, is as blasphemous as the prayer of the Unitarian socialist that American children are forced to recite in school. To pledge allegiance to a flag is idolatry; to proclaim the Union indivisible not only insults the men who founded this federal republic but justifies the continued centralization of power that is the bane of all modern states.

Real Americans are bound by traditions and habits that connect us both to the great struggles in our national history and to the local places where our kin are buried and our children are christened. If we are not Georgians or Kansans, we cannot be Americans except by the polite fiction that allows us to pretend (as we ought to pretend) that naturalized immigrants are as American as native sons. This generic U.S. identity is as bloodless and bogus as the New Soviet Man. Armed with this fictional identity, nationalists would have to form a party, take over the government, reconstruct the nation by imposing a propaganda curriculum on the schools and by destroying the last few tatters of provincial diversity—and it would be morning again in America, again.

Even if such a nationalist scenario were a paradise and not a nightmare, it is absurd to pretend that it might ever be played out. To the extent that we Americans still possess an authentic identity, we are finding it in our churches, in our families, and, occasionally, in our ethnic traditions. I am dismayed by the prospect of large parts of the United States turning Mexican, but I am terrified by the reality that we are creating: a nationalist-socialist state that will eliminate both the Mexican and the Anglo-American identities. c

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In the San Juans

by Catharine Savage Brosman

The satisfaction, first, was to confound
the skeptics. We had stopped to talk with two—
a hirsute man from Texas, middle-aged,
beside a pickup truck, and then a younger chap,
his son, I guess, involved in struggles
with a motorcycle and a ramp. The parleying
took place just off the highway
at the entrance to a forest road we hoped

to take, ascending steeply from the Rio Grande.
By *we*, I mean five friends, three vehicles—
my Jeep, a monster diesel Ram
with an RV, and a Ford truck, well-traveled,
towing a fifth wheel. The Texans had been up
off-road. "So what's it like up there?"
"It's mighty slippery . . . a mud-bowl, don't
you know. We managed to make out

on the two-wheeler, but I reckon that on four,
and pulling rigs like those, I wouldn't try.
Well, we'll be moseying on." The motorcycle
loaded on the back at last, the two
set off, and we consulted. Power we had,
big tires, and strong will; but it had rained—fat,
wholesome drops—on the San Juans
the day before. We drove up anyhow—

eight miles and more (I clocked it), gaining
height in spiral moves and grinding over rocks
and gravel. And the ruts were not too bad.
Though mire ruled out a likely spot
among some aspen, farther up where spruce
were thick, we found a loggers' track,
abandoned, which unraveled in a clearing
for a level camp. We had our water

with us. By evening, we had gathered wood,
laid out a ring of massive stones,
and built a fire that lasted seven hours.
Surrounded as we were by picket trees,
enclosed in folds of mountains, we surmised
the highest range off to the south, and felt
its shadows, as the sky, with Venus
barely visible, turned pale and powdery blue—

a lovely woman, but no longer young,
preferring softer lighting on her face,
and brilliants in her hair. So finally, the joy
was in ourselves. Beneath the fledgling
stars, we listened to the birds in evensong
and watched the smoke trail off
as from an offering, the old wood crackling
in the flames, the old hearts incandescent, pure.

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by Paul Gottfried

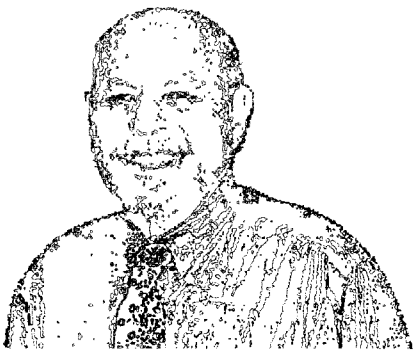
Plus ça Change . . .

In the December 27, 2002, issue of the English edition of *Forward*, self-described Orthodox Jew David Klinghoffer attacks Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn for his recent book *Two Hundred Years Together*. In this historical work, Solzhenitsyn deals with Jews and Russians living side by side from 1775, when Russia came to occupy the heavily Jewish regions of Eastern Poland and Lithuania, until after the fall of communism in 1995. Although the book does not attack collectively all Eastern European Jews and praises the filial pietism and customary life associated with the Orthodox, Klinghoffer accuses Solzhenitsyn of "cast[ing] Jewish socialists in the role of demonic villains, seeking to overturn Russian society in the years before and after the 1917 Revolution." He notes that Russian historian Richard Pipes (himself Jewish), writing in the *New Republic*, agrees that Jews played a pivotal role in the Russian Revolution and that Pipes does not impute to Solzhenitsyn any sinister purpose. Klinghoffer, however, remains unconvinced. He accuses the Russian author of "invidious age-old distinctions," and, though he does not treat him as harshly as he does Jesus (Who abetted Christian antisemitism "by constantly fussing with the rabbinic sages"), he considers Solzhenitsyn a troublemaker. Solzhenitsyn's "tendency to split us into good and bad Jews is very ancient and typically comes to no good."

Setting aside his questionable charges against Jesus, Klinghoffer does provoke serious questions. Either Jews were disproportionately represented among communist revolutionaries, including those who oversaw mass murder, or they were not. If they were, then there is surely nothing wrong with Solzhenitsyn or Pipes saying so, any more than there is with someone acknowledging the preponderance of German nationals in the Waffen SS. I can only imagine Klinghoffer's reaction if a German publicist stated that those who called attention to the crimes committed by other Germans were dividing the German people.

Solzhenitsyn's assertions may understate the reality—a conclusion to which I am led by reading Johannes Rogalla von Bieberstein's work *Jüdischer Bolschewismus: Mythos und Realität*. The author, a meticulous multilingual scholar, investigates a wide range of primary and secondary literature (including works by Jewish communists celebrating their involvement with the Soviets and with Stalin). Bieberstein shows that Jewish membership in Russian and Polish communist organizations was at least eight times as great as Jewish representation in the general populations. Jewish communists dominated the Soviet-controlled international revolutionary Comintern and its publications, and Jews were active in the secret-police apparatus in Russia and elsewhere in the Soviet Empire. Much of the virulent antisemitism that spread through interwar Europe and created a breeding ground for Nazism was based on "fear of Jewish Bolshevism." Such well-known Jewish Bolsheviks as Hungarian communist Bela Kun and Comintern leader Karl Radek gave substance to this fear by steadily proclaiming their hatred for Christianity.

While Bieberstein demonstrates that anti-Christian revulsion affected Jewish radicalism, he leaves no doubt that Jews in Eastern Europe viewed their social situation as "hopeless." He quotes a 1904 study, *Die Juden der Gegenwart* by German Jewish sociologist Arthur Ruppin, who argues that "wealthy Jews fund revolutionary socialism not because of the economic oppression of the proletariat but because of their own frustrations." Bieberstein remarks that the "particularly strong radicalism" observed among Eastern European Jews, especially the Russian Jewish immigrants who helped set up the French, English, and American Communist Parties, resulted from their exclusion from czarist Russian society. German and Austrian Jews, who enjoyed greater civil rights, were correspondingly less radical, even in their socialism. Those Jews who felt most discriminated against struck back by embracing often destructive revolutionary politics, which, in turn, nurtured even more poisonous antisemitism. Needless to say, communist leaders, starting with Stalin, were quite happy to sacrifice their Jewish revolutionary shock troops once they were no longer deemed necessary for their purposes.



That the communists in power turned on Jewish revolutionaries—some of whom, such as Trotsky, had incited Bolshevik crimes—does not exonerate the victimizers-turned-victims, however. Nor can we attribute the misdeeds of all communist fanatics to social suffering. Stalin's Jewish general secretary in the Ukraine, Lazare Kaganovich, who was responsible for the murder of millions of Ukrainian peasants, did not grow up in squalor. Like the parents of Trotsky and those of Rosa Luxemburg, the elder Kaganoviches were affluent landowners. The same was true of Lev Kamenev (Rosenfeld) and of the notorious sybarite Gregor Zinoviev, who, together with Stalin, ruled the Soviet party at the time of Lenin's death. Hungarian communists Bela Kun, Georg Lukacs, and Tibor Szamuely could not even claim to have suffered social indignity. All of them came of age in a liberal monarchy that had ennobled the fathers or grandfathers of two of them. On a 1926 trip to Soviet Russia, anti-Christian Jewish Marxist Walter Benjamin rejoiced that the communists were wiping out Christian civilization. Benjamin grew up in wealth.

Some of the Jewish bourgeoisie, however, supported the anticommunists. This happened even in Russia, though the sporadic anti-Jewish outbursts of the anti-Bolsheviks made Jewish anticommunist opposition weaker than it might have been. Vera, the esteemed wife of Vladimir Nabokov, came from an assimilated Russian-Jewish family that sided with the anti-Bolshevik Whites in the Russian Civil War. In Eastern Europe, the Jewish bourgeoisie provided the most politically active Jews on both sides. In both the first century and the 20th, as Klinghoffer reminds us, Jews opposed other Jews. And, in the tumultuous events described by Solzhenitsyn, the very bad side won. c

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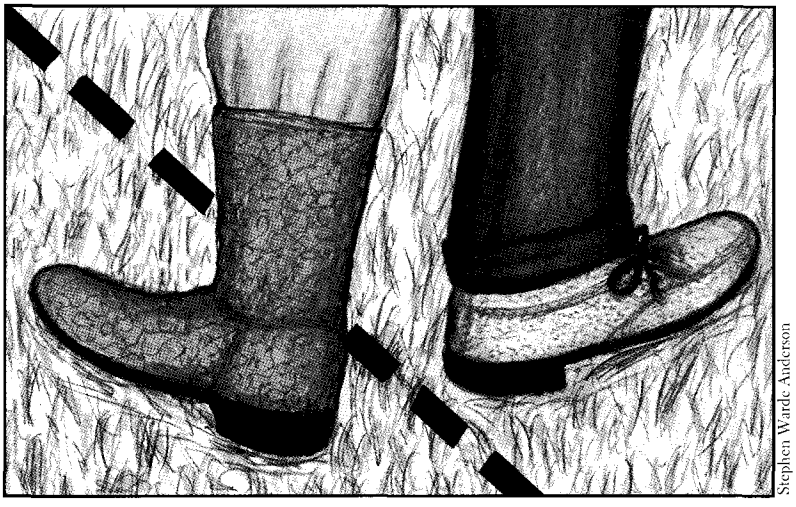
"You Have To Commit!"

The Problem of Dual Citizenship

by Roger D. McGrath



Stephen Warde Anderson

We were on the practice field preparing for a team that ran the option. Our scout team was running the upcoming opponent's offense. To our surprise, the scouts executed the option perfectly, which left our outside linebacker frozen halfway between the quarterback, cutting off the block of a tight end, and a trailing halfback arcing toward the sideline. "What the hell you doing—splitting the distance? You're neither fish nor fowl," bellowed one of our coaches. "*You have to commit!*"

Whenever I hear of dual citizenship, I think of the coach's words. Today, we have people who are neither American nor foreign but something between, not fully committed to any particular country. I was stunned a decade ago when Strobe Talbot declared in *Time* that nationhood and citizenship had become obsolete. I am no longer stunned. There is a growing trend toward dual citizenship, which suggests that the fierce loyalty and complete identification with the United States that I always thought was simply part and parcel of being an American is on the wane. Moreover, there seems to be no stigma attached to dual citizenship. This was not always the case.

When the Japanese began immigrating to the United States early in the 20th century, they were viewed with suspicion for several reasons; prominent among them was dual citizenship. The immigrants themselves were ineligible for American citizenship and remained solely Japanese citizens, but their American-born children were citizens of both the United States and Japan. Under the 14th Amendment, by virtue of their birth on American soil—the principle of *jus soli*—the children were American citizens. Under Japanese nationality law, as codified in 1899, the children were Japanese citizens if their fathers were Japanese—the principle of *jus sanguinis*. In 1924, under pressure from the United States, Japan began requiring Japanese resident in America to register the births of their children within 14 days at a Japanese consulate in order to acquire dual citizenship for the children. It is not surprising that many Japanese failed to register their children within the allotted time. What is surprising and significant, however, is that nearly 40 percent of all children born after 1924 were duly registered. Then, too, the requirement seems to have been designed more to quiet fears in America and to have been ignored in Japan. Japanese authorities continued to refer to all Japanese living in America (and elsewhere overseas) as *doho* ("countrymen") and considered them subjects of the emperor. As a teacher in a Saturday Japanese school in Hawaii said to his *nisei* pupils in 1939, "You must remember that only a trick of fate has brought you so far from your homeland, but there must be no question of your loyalty. When Japan calls, you must know that it is Japanese blood that flows in your veins."

These dual citizens were commonly sent to Japan to be educated. By 1940, over 20,000 American-born Japanese had been educated in Japan. Known as *kibei*, they were dual citizens in every sense. Not only were they fluent in Japanese, but many preferred its use to English after they returned to the United States. They were also steeped in Japanese history and culture and were supporters of Japanese expansion in the Far East. They could hardly be distinguished from young militarists in Japan. All of this was troublesome for fully Americanized Japanese who feared the *kibei* would cause problems for them in the United States. The Office of Naval Intelligence was interested in them as well. Lt. Cmdr. K.D. Ringle had been gathering intelligence on the *kibei* for months before the attack on Pearl Harbor. In January 1942, he submitted a report that said:

> [T]he most potentially dangerous element of all are those American citizens of Japanese ancestry who have spent the formative years of their lives, from 10 to 20, in Japan and have returned to the United States to claim their le-

Roger D. McGrath is the author of Gunfighters, Highwaymen, and Vigilantes.

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gal American citizenship within the last few years. Those people are essentially and inherently Japanese and may have been deliberately sent back to the United States by the Japanese government to act as agents.

The *kibei* made a prophet of Ringle. They established the Sokoku Kenkyu Seinen Dan (Young Men's Association for the Study of the Mother Country) and the Sokuji Kikoku Hoshi Dan (Organization to Return Immediately to the Homeland to Serve) and called for all American-born Japanese to renounce their U.S. citizenship. Ultimately, 5,589 officially did so. Most of the renunciants were housed at Tule Lake Segregation Center in northeastern California, just below the Oregon line. There they greeted the rising sun, cried "*banzai*," blew bugles, drilled, celebrated on Pearl Harbor Day, rioted, and waited to be expatriated to Japan.

Then came an ironic twist. During the early summer of 1945—just after Okinawa had fallen to American forces—many of the renunciants applied to the Department of Justice to have their renunciations withdrawn. The number of applications increased dramatically after the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Suddenly, it was not so bad to be an American. The Justice Department, however, responded by announcing that "all persons whose applications to renounce citizenship have been approved by the Attorney General of the United States, will be repatriated to Japan." The renunciants contacted Wayne Collins, a San Francisco attorney and a representative of the American Civil Liberties Union, who immediately filed suit in federal court asking that the renunciants be set at liberty, that the deportation order be rescinded, that the renunciations be voided, and that renunciants be declared U.S. citizens again. When Collins first filed the suit, there were 987 plaintiffs. Within weeks, there were 4,322. The litigation dragged on for several years. Eventually, the plaintiffs prevailed on the deportation issue but failed to regain their citizenship, remaining in the United States as "native American aliens."

The final irony came in 1988. The renunciants were included among those who received $20,000 each from the American taxpayers for "human suffering" as part of the Civil Liberties Act. Renunciants who had not tried to regain their U.S. citizenship and who had not fought deportation received the money also: It was sent to them in Japan.

During the 1930's, there were more than 20,000 *nisei* living in Japan. Upward of 7,000 of them served in the Japanese army or navy. Some were drafted; others volunteered. One of the first to fight for Japan was Los Angeles native Shigeru Matsuura, who served with the Kwantung Army in Manchuria and was decorated for valor in the Manchurian Incident in 1931. Several dozen others followed. At least four *nisei*, including three from the greater Los Angeles area, died when the Kwantung Army's 23rd Division was mauled by Russian forces on the Manchurian border. Japan's Neutrality Pact with Russia in 1941 ended the fighting in Manchuria until August 1945. In the meantime, Japan established a POW camp at Mukden. The camp's paymaster and interpreter was San Francisco native and Tokyo Imperial University graduate Eiichi Noda. Included among the prisoners were 1,400 American soldiers from Corregidor. By the time they arrived in 1943, most were too emaciated and debilitated to work, but some 200 became slave laborers for the Manchukuo Machine Tool Works. Their taskmaster was another San Francisco-born *nisei*, Yoshio Kai.

By the late 1930's, however, most *nisei* were assigned to units fighting in China. Japanese newspapers in Hawaii and California encouraged American-born Japanese to serve the emperor. In 1938, the *Jitsugyo no Hawaii* urged:

> Japanese of Hawaii! There's absolutely no need to feel any hesitation. What's wrong with serving your ancestral land? Are not those who vacillate about contributing money at this time of national emergency being unpatriotic? Look! Has not our Army Minister sent a respectful letter of thanks even for those who contributed fifty cents? Isn't this the flower, the sincerity, the essence of our Japanese military?

The same newspaper and others aimed at Japanese in the islands and on the Pacific Coast carried stories about the valor of *nisei* fighting in China. The newspapers also ran obituaries of fallen *nisei*, usually with photographs of the young men in their Imperial Army uniforms. Torao Morishige, a *nisei* from Honolulu and a sergeant in the Imperial Army, was killed in action in China. His obituary quoted his mother as saying that his last words to her were, "If news of my death should come, please rejoice." His brothers were quoted as saying that they were now going to Japan to join the army. (And I had always thought that the first Americans to fight in China had names such as Bob Neale, "Tex" Hill, Jack Newkirk, "Black Mac" McGarry, Chuck Older, R.T. Smith, "Whitey" Lawlor, and Johnny Donovan—the men known as the Flying Tigers.)

Nisei served Japan throughout the Pacific and Southeast Asia during World War II. Many were interpreters and guards in prison camps. Prisoners were often astounded when a Japanese soldier spoke to them in English with an American accent. Although there were some exceptions, the American-born Japanese mistreated, tortured, and killed American prisoners just as their Japanese-born comrades did. British and Australian prisoners suffered the wrath of *nisei* as well. At a camp in southern Thailand, a Japanese-American interpreter—described as having a lame leg, American-style glasses, and an American accent—and several guards beat a British sergeant major with bamboo and teak poles until he was unrecognizable and insensible. Then they stood him in the sun for five days.

The most notorious of the prison guards was Tomoya "Tom" Kawakita. Born in Calexico to Japanese immigrant parents, he left California for Japan in 1939 at the age of 18. He graduated from Meiji University after the war had erupted and served the emperor as an interpreter and guard at Oeyama prison camp on Honshu. Prisoners called him "Efficiency Expert" for his effective methods of torture. He seemed to delight in inflicting the greatest possible pain. He also forced prisoners to beat one another and then tortured those he thought had not struck blows with sufficient force.

Oeyama was established next to a nickel mine not by accident: The prisoners were used as slave labor. Kawakita saw to it that the Americans, already weakened by malnourishment and disease, worked until they dropped. He taunted them continually. When American bombers began hitting Japan and the prisoners suspected that the end was near, Kawakita told them, "We will kill all you prisoners right here anyway, whether you win the war or lose it." He later said, "You guys needn't be interested in when the war will be over, because you won't go back. You will stay here and work. I will go back to the States because I am an American citizen."

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Kawakita was right about himself. Somehow, he reentered the United States without arousing any attention and enrolled at the University of Southern California. Then, in the fall of 1946, at a Sears department store in Boyle Heights, William L. Bruce, a former Army artilleryman who survived the fall of Corregidor, the Bataan Death March, and imprisonment at Oeyama, recognized Kawakita. "I was so dumfounded," said Bruce, "I just halted in my tracks and stared at him as he hurried by. It was a good thing, too. If I'd reacted then, I'm not sure but that I might have taken the law into my own hands—and probably Kawakita's neck." Bruce recovered in time to follow Kawakita outside and copy the license number of the car in which the former guard drove away. Bruce notified the FBI, and Kawakita was soon in custody.

Charged with treason, Kawakita was represented by Morris Lavine, who called himself the "attorney for the damned." Lavine's clients included mobsters Mickey Cohen and Johnny Roselli and union boss Jimmy Hoffa. At the trial, Kawakita suddenly became a born-again Japanese citizen, claiming that he had stopped being an American citizen when he went to Japan and, thus, owed allegiance only to the emperor. The testimony of two-dozen American prisoners who had suffered under Kawakita was to the contrary. So, too, were Kawakita's actions after the war. Nonetheless, U.S. District Court Judge William Mathes instructed the jurors that, if they determined that Kawakita genuinely believed he was no longer an American citizen, they must find him not guilty of treason. On several occasions, the jurors told the judge that they were hopelessly deadlocked. Finally, they returned a verdict: Kawakita was guilty of 8 of 13 counts of treason. Judge Mathes, who had seemed to make the jury instructions as favorable to Kawakita as possible, then imposed the severest penalty for treason—death—and said, "Reflection leads to the conclusion that the only worthwhile use for the life of a traitor, such as this defendant has proved to be, is to serve as an example to those of weak moral fiber who may hereafter be tempted to commit treason against the United States."

Kawakita appealed his conviction to the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco. William J. Kelleher, a federal prosecutor, drafted the U.S. government's response to the appeal. While Kelleher was working on his brief, Bruce and two other former Oeyama prisoners called on him. "Me and the boys had a little meeting last night," declared Bruce. "And we want you to know that if he ever gets out, we'll be waiting for him." Kelleher said he was greatly relieved when the appeals court upheld the conviction, by a 3-0 vote.

Kawakita then appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court. The case was heard in 1952. The question before the Court was where the allegiance of a dual citizen lies when war erupts between the two nations that claim his loyalty. "Of course, a person caught in that predicament," said Justice William O. Douglas, "can resolve the conflict of duty by openly electing one nationality or the other." Kawakita had chosen neither, ruled the Court in a 4-3 decision (with two abstentions). Instead, he had chosen to maintain his U.S. citizenship while serving Japan. Then, when faced with charges of treason, he wanted the freedom to claim Japanese citizenship only. "One who wants that freedom," Justice Douglas stated, "can get it by renouncing his American citizenship. He cannot turn it to a fair-weather citizenship, retaining it for possible contingent benefits but meanwhile playing the role of the traitor. An American citizen owes allegiance to the United States wherever he may reside."

Kawakita's story does not have a happy ending. In 1953, President Eisenhower, responding to appeals from the Japanese government, commuted Kawakita's death sentence to life in prison. Ten years later, President Kennedy ordered him freed on the condition that he be immediately deported and never allowed to reenter the United States. His three sisters, who spent time in a relocation center during World War II, became eligible for $20,000 each as a result of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988. William Bruce and his fellow prisoners received nothing but the G.I. Bill.

Untold numbers of Mexicans now claim dual citizenship, encouraged to do so by Mexican President Vicente Fox. As a result, California and other states will soon witness the spectacle of Mexicans voting in both U.S. and Mexican elections without leaving the United States. The border between the United States and Mexico has not quite been erased, but it certainly has been smudged. Like the Japanese *doho*, President Fox says that Mexicans are Mexicans even if they reside in the United States and have become U.S. citizens. Like Tom Kawakita, many Mexicans want the freedom to chose whichever citizenship is convenient at the moment. There are now hundreds of murderers and other felons who have committed crimes in California and fled to Mexico. More than 60 murderers from Los Angeles County alone are south of the border, including Armando Garcia, who gunned down sheriff's deputy David March during a traffic stop. Garcia and the others understand that their chances of arrest in Mexico are slight. And Mexico recently announced that it will not extradite any criminal suspect who faces a sentence of death or life in prison to the United States.

Even Mexican illegal aliens have now acquired a form of dual citizenship. Mexican consulates in California and Illinois (and in other states) have begun issuing "matricula consular" identification cards to Mexicans residing there. Although legal immigrants have no need for such a card, several California cities, including San Francisco, and Illinois cities, including Chicago and Rockford, have announced that they will accept them as formal identification for all purposes. The city of Oxnard, California, which is now nearly 70 percent Hispanic, announced in January that it will begin accepting the cards. "I'm in favor of it," Oxnard Mayor Manuel Lopez said. "Identification is needed for everything these days, and it will certainly make it easier for people to do business with the city." Mexican Consul Fernando Gamboa said his Oxnard office issues about 1,000 matricula-consular cards per week. If nothing else, the numbers reveal something about the size of the illegal-alien population in Ventura County. Republican Elton Gallegly, who represents much of Ventura County in Congress, argued that the cards should not be accepted as formal identification because they are issued by a foreign government and the United States thus has no control over who receives them. Ironically, it was Gallegly's statements that were considered controversial, not those of Mayor Lopez. Strobe Talbot must be proud.

An entire population of dual citizens with divided loyalties is developing in the American Southwest. I suspect this is happening throughout the United States with several population groups. America is rapidly becoming a kind of enterprise zone for the world's populations—not much more than a place to make money. Becoming an American now means little more than residing within certain lines on a map. Acquiring wealth and possessions defines "the American dream." Somehow, I think the Founding Fathers had more in mind than this. Time for William Bruce and the boys to take some action. C

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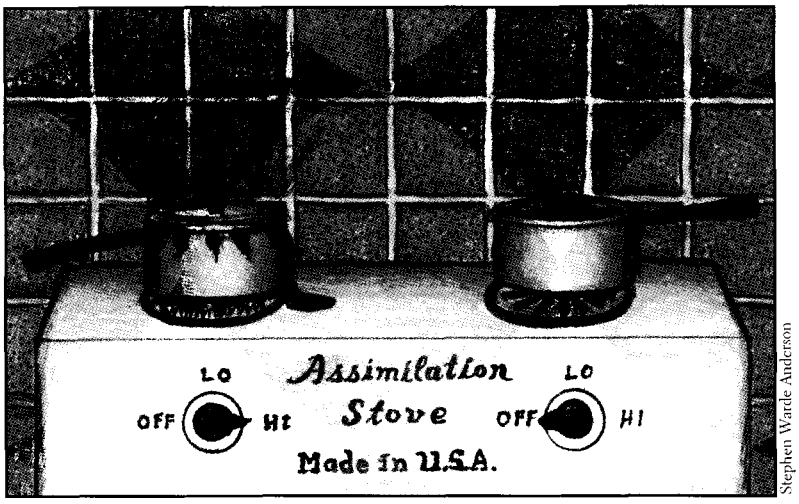
A Nation of (Proletarian) Immigrants

Mexicans, Here and There

by Chilton Williamson, Jr.



Stephen Warde Anderson

One of many reasons conservatives are so often at a disadvantage in political discussions is that we do not see why there should *be* any discussion, since we do not recognize a problem *open* to discussion at all.

Take, for instance, assimilation. If you do not believe the United States should be accepting immigrants in the first place—and I mean, at this point in history, *any* immigrants at all—then the issue of whether immigrants should be made to assimilate is, at the very least, a secondary question, since your main concern is for halting immigration entirely.

The issue here is, among other things, whether solutions to the assimilation problem should be developed at the national level or the local one. Under the U.S. Constitution, the establishment of "a uniform rule of Naturalization" is entrusted to the federal government, not to the states that make up the federal union. The Constitution, however, is mum on the subject of any kind of rule, uniform or not, of assimilation; the Constitutional Convention never envisioned the central government needing to *have* a policy. This, of course, is because sedition, not assimilation, was what the new government believed it had to fear from uncooperative and malign aliens.

That is not to say that the Founding Fathers, as individual citizens, were unconcerned by nonassimilation—quite the opposite, in fact. John Jay, John Adams, John Randolph of Roanoke, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and George Washington—to name just a few—all spoke or wrote on the importance of what they called uniformity of principles and habit and the necessity for a heterogeneous compound formed by one American people.

While the U.S. government passed, in 1819, the first federal act dealing with immigration and, a year later, went on to enact what became a national immigration policy, before 1819 and after that time, the various states and municipalities wrote and enforced their own immigration controls. Nevertheless, for about 150 years now, immigration policy has been the preserve of the federal government and is certain to remain so. Moreover, no assimilation policy whatsoever exists. We may be absolutely certain, however—particularly after September 11—that if such a policy ever is created, it will be a *federal* policy with an agency or subagency of its own, managed by Bill Bennett, Lynn Cheney, John Miller, Ron Unz, or one or another of their faceless simulacra. So enough said about *assimilation* as a national project, like the WPA, CCC, VISTA, or AmeriCorps. The real issue is *immigration*.

Despite the impression readers may have received from *The Hundredth Meridian*, I cannot claim to have traveled extensively in Mexico. I *have* spent enough time south of the border to have developed plenty of impressions of Mexico and the Mexican people and to have drawn what I consider to be fair conclusions.

Mexicans *in Mexico* are a warm and friendly people, even to gringos—particularly when the gringo wears jeans, cowboy boots, and a straw hat instead of shorts, a Hawaiian shirt, and a *Como Caca* cap. Much of the tension between the Mexican natives and tourists is class-based and unrelated to racial or cultural differences. Mexicans are a simple, not to say naive, people, accustomed to accepting others at face value. This partly explains why Mexican culture seems primitive to American and

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Chilton Williamson, Jr., is the senior editor for books at Chronicles *and the author of* The Immigration Mystique: American's False Conscience *(HarperCollins).*

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European visitors—who are charmed or appalled, accordingly—when, in fact, it is simply *basic*. This quality of basicality, so repellent to the ordinary tourist, has fascinated artists and writers—Caroline Gordon, Graham Greene, Evelyn Waugh, Malcolm Lowry, Tom Lea, Cormac McCarthy—who discover in it reality, *la condition humaine*, which is, of course, what genuine artists and writers are after. This reality is what I value and appreciate in Mexico, to the extent that it no longer exists in the United States.

I find attending Mass in Mexico, where often the church floor is dirt and the congregation is made up of people in rags, the halt, and the lame, a far more genuine and moving experience than attending Mass often is in the United States, where half the affluent so-called worshipers are in shorts and sandals and the kid in front of me is wearing a T-shirt with a drawing of one pig mounting another on the back of it, above the legend "Makin' Bacon"—precisely obscuring my line of vision just at the moment of the elevation of the Host.

If immigrants from Mexico brought that quality of simple piety and basic experience north with them, I would feel somewhat better about the invasion from Mexico—while uttering a prayer that Makin' Bacon and his sort never make their way south to Chihuahua, Sonora, Jalisco, Zacateca, and Sinaloa to poison the forms of local piety there. They do not bring such piety north, of course, because it is precisely that simplicity of experience that immigrants to the United States are attempting to escape. Far from appreciating the human condition for what it is, they hope to transcend it; and, while we cannot entirely blame them for that, we need to realize that the immigrant "dream" we hear so much about from American politicians, journalists, and immigration activists is essentially a proletarian dream, a dream that has a very specific cultural and political component. If there is anything worse than proletarians, it is proletarians with money; and America is rapidly becoming a nation of such proletarians.

Since the 1920's, America has been a proletarian's dream, which is why she has become a magnet for the proletariat internationally. Native-born Americans have devolved from a free and independent people into a *wealthy* proletariat—which is not a contradiction in terms when you think of how servile politically, how puerile and degenerate culturally, we have allowed ourselves to become. What is most attractive about America for today's immigrants is precisely what sophisticated and intelligent Old Americans abhor most about their country: shopping malls and fast food, slovenly clothing, movies, TV, rock music, mass sports events—in other words, bread and circuses.

It is not that Americans are assimilating to the immigrants; instead, both are meeting halfway to form the North American component of an international proletariat that happens to be American in the same way that U.S.-based international corporations happen to be American. In other words, both natives and immigrants are assimilating to an international ideal—one that is created, fostered, and developed by globalist financiers, corporatists, and politicians alike—inspired by the American example. Immigration, viewed in this way, is quite literally the fusion and reinforcement of the worst of both worlds, the Third and the First.

Those simple, open, warm Indians—and we need to remember that, when we speak of Mexicans, we really mean *Indians* working for the Indian, not the Spanish, *reconquista*—I know from riding the third-class trains in Mexico, attending the bullfights there, walking the streets, and eating and drinking in the restaurants and *cantinas*, become a very different people when they cross the border to settle in *El Norte*. Partly, this is just human nature, whose hostile, competitive, and exclusivist side is always encouraged by the presence of its own kind in numbers. Increasingly, however, it is assuming a deliberate political aspect, developed and encouraged by politicians in Mexico City determined to established a powerful Fifth Column in the United States. Whether the aim ultimately is *reconquista* does not really matter. In fact, I can imagine that Washington, say a half-century from now, will be delighted to give Texas and California back to Mexico (if she wants them back, that is). Why buy the cow when you can get milk through the fence?

And it is not just Mexican immigrants who are getting aggressive. "Spokesmen" for the Asian immigrant community are beginning to follow the Mexicans' example. My late friend Jim Rauen, who spent his life in Chicago before he retired to New Mexico, told me a story about a Korean couple who owned the condominium next door to his on the Gold Coast. "You know," the Korean wife told Jim, "we think you and Ann should know how Koreans feel about white people. We think you're lazy and you're stupid and you're ugly, and also you smell. We Koreans expect to take over America and run it for ourselves. No offense, you understand. Just so you *do* understand." (If it had been I instead of Jim, the only honest Korean immigrant in America would have been a dead Korean immigrant as well.)

An implicit theme of my book, *The Immigration Mystique*, is that, contrary to received opinion among even immigration restrictionists and reformists, the post-1965 immigrant groups are not the only ones who have not assimilated. The post-Civil War immigrants—the Irish to some extent, the Slavs, the Southern Europeans, and those from Eastern Europe—have not, either. Needless to say, this was among the least popular arguments in a very unpopular book, and I have regretted ever since that I neglected to appeal to Daniel Patrick Moynihan's and Nathan Glazer's *Beyond the Melting Pot* as well as Michael Novak's *Rise of the Unmeltable Ethnics* for support. All three men made the same argument that I did, while staying rich, famous, and respected into the bargain, being obviously non-WASP. I could not get away with saying the same thing, of course. (With a name like Chilton Williamson, Jr., no one suspects you of being Catholic.)

For most of America's history—up until 1965, that is—the dominant WASP population was resented and disliked by non-Protestant, non-British immigrant groups. Since 1965, that dislike and jealous resentment has been transferred to European-Americans generally by non-European immigrants, encouraged by a natural sense of ethnic and cultural hostility and identity as well as by the suicidal impulses of European-America itself. Today, the only conceivable advocate for assimilation is the federal government, for whom assimilation only amounts to another form of "homeland security." And we may easily imagine what a national crusade for assimilation in *that* context would entail.

So it comes down, finally, to this: If there is no need for something, there is everything to be said *against* having it, and nothing to be said *for*. Does America *really* need 30 million foreign-born proles arriving over a period of three decades to complement the 200 million native ones already here? Whether assimilated or not, more immigrants spell nothing but inconvenience, at best, and disaster, at worst, for this country. c

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Apocalypse Now

by Aaron D. Wolf

"If a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand."

—Mark 3:25

Stephen Warde Anderson

American evangelicals, according to former Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, "are the Israelis' best friend in the whole world." In return, they dubbed him "the Ronald Reagan of Israel." That so many are still surprised by those statements indicates that, by and large, those happy to be called evangelicals or even fundamentalists have been largely ignored by most of the dominant American mass culture, though a few outside the fold who have stopped ignoring this "sleeping giant" have reaped tremendous rewards: election victories, foreign-policy directives, and undying political loyalty.

Republicans, driven by such key evangelical leaders as Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell, have, at least since the Reagan Revolution, made use of the "Christian Right" during election season, parroting such shibboleths as "pro-life" and "pro-family" to the soul-stirring delight of the world-weary faithful; those who are the most interested in being "best friends" with the evangelicals, however, are the Israeli political right, whose political objectives are the unlimited expansion of Israeli territories and the subjugation (if not deportation or even elimination) of the Palestinians. Neoconservatives in Washington and New York City, together with those evangelicals who have entered the realm of politics (from Robertson to James Dobson to Lindsey Graham) with a view to advancing the Christian Right's agenda on a national level, demand that every evangelical's chad be punched "Republican: Straight Ticket" for two reasons: The GOP is pro-life; the GOP is pro-Israel. (For faithful evangelicals, the argument that Israel, not the United States, is threatened by Saddam's alleged "weapons of mass destruction" only makes the case for total war against Iraq stronger.)

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That Paul Wolfowitz or Bibi Netanyahu may merely be using the evangelicals' faithful support to advance an agenda incompatible with the American interest or the principles of justice does not occur to faithful believers who love "Zion." They are driven by a theology that is as ingenious as it is unbiblical. When they watch Bibi as he extends the hand of friendship, they look beyond him to the New Jerusalem, the coming Millennium. When the liberal media mocks their "rigid biblical literalism," they cling to their Bibles: "All Israel shall be saved"; "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings"; "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved"; "as much as ye have done it unto the least of my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Every time they approach the voter's booth, they know that they have but one choice: Support the candidate who supports God's chosen people, or face divine judgment ("I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee").

Christians familiar with the historic interpretations of the biblical prophecies concerning "Israel" (the Church) and the latter days may find it easy to dismiss the biblical claims of evangelical Zionists. The blame, however, for this eschatological aberration must be laid at the feet of the Main Lines and their clergy and scholars for failing, at a crucial moment in American Church history, to articulate the genuine, historic, Christian doctrine of Christ so beautifully and succinctly rendered in the Nicene Creed: "He shall come again in glory to judge both the quick and the dead, whose kingdom shall have no end"; and, again, "We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come."

The fact that evangelical Christians can countenance a belief that the Judge of the Quick and the Dead could return to

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the earth for a thousand-year reign only *after which* "all things will be put under his feet" is more a reflection of a deficient Christology and soteriology than a misguided interpretation of one or two proof-texts. Christians who understand that Christ's matchless glory is expressed chiefly in that He "took on the form of a servant" and "humbled himself unto death, even the death of the cross" will never be able to accept the notion that He will one day rule from His Jerusalem headquarters as a mere dictator over a world in which all is not completely subject to Him. Nor is it fathomable that the Rider of the White Horse, Whose Name is Faithful and True, could appear in the clouds "with all the holy angels" and "ten-thousand of his saints," without the consummation of all human history occurring immediately. Yet these positions (and many other theological *non sequiturs*) are part of the end-times dogma to which the evangelical world is so completely devoted—dispensational premillennialism.

Dispensationalists (all of them are "premillennial") think themselves conservatives and biblical literalists, but the view they hold is less than 200 years old, and the hermeneutic they employ is, at best, selectively literal. (As they read the Bible, *Israel* always means "the Jews," yet the seven-headed dragon of the Apocalypse has neither scales nor a tail but is made up of the nations of the "revived Roman Empire," of late identified as the European Union.) Contrary to the dispensationalists' "literalism," the *sensus literalis*, which Martin Luther championed as the first principle of biblical hermeneutics, demands that the "letter" of Scripture be interpreted within the context of its genre: poetry as poetry, history as history, and apocalyptic literature as apocalyptic literature. Thus, those who would interpret the last book of the Bible have, as their guide, both the prophetic literature of the Old Testament (chiefly concerning Christ's First Advent) and its fulfillment in the Gospels and the Epistles of the New Testament.

The success of dispensationalism in America is proof that Jesus was right when He warned that kicking out a demon is dangerous if the Holy Ghost does not take his place: If the house remains vacant, the demon will return and bring seven of his friends with him. In the case of American evangelicalism, the demon was old-fashioned millenarianism ("postmillennialism"), the notion that God was using America to make the world better and better, thus inaugurating a secular "Kingdom of God" on the earth. This idea was first advanced in the New World by the Puritans, many of whom believed Boston to be the New Jerusalem. As the fires of the First and Second Great Awakenings raged in New England, many of the denominational barriers (Congregational, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, and Baptist) melted away and Yale's New Divinity School—emphasizing revival and "heart religion" over any sort of confessional orthodoxy—took center stage. Despite their aversion to dogma, however, these believers retained the eschatology of the Puritans: The great "revivals," they reasoned, were proof that the Holy Ghost was at work in America, bringing about the Millennium—the reign of Christianity over all the earth. Being a Presbyterian was not as important as being an *evangelical* (though many remained within their formal churches); and, chances are, you were "converted" quite apart from a church, in an open field where Charles Finney and his contemporary (early-19th-century) Christian musicians were holding their traveling meeting.

What, in the absence of parish life and doctrinal catechesis, would be the chief outward expression of this apocalyptic "heart religion"? As the fires of revival spread from New England to the Upper Midwest in the urban centers built by Yankees, campaigns against alcohol and for female suffrage (too many men were drunks, and teetotaling women hoped to rock the vote) combined with abolitionism to produce a visible evangelical piety.

When Dixie seceded from the "sacred" Union, evangelicals knew what was at stake: The departure of the South would tear apart the Kingdom of God and uninaugurate the Millennium. While power-hungry Republicans pulled the strings in Washington, evangelicals rallied to the Union cause and beat down the traditionalist Southerners, who were less enamored of the world-vision of the New Age. Hymn writer Philip Bliss, inspired by General Sherman's determined admonition to General Corse to "hold the fort" at Allatoona Pass, penned the following evangelical standard, which conflated the Union's mission with Christ's *parousia*: "'Hold the fort, for I am coming' / Jesus signals still. / Wave the answer back to Heaven, / 'By thy grace we will.'"

By 1865, however, it seemed to many that the Millennium had been lost. The sheer carnage of over half a million dead gave second thoughts to those eager to believe that America was the harbinger of the Kingdom. As Yankee chaplain Dwight Lyman Moody would confess, many men had simply lost their heart religion on the battlefield. In addition, the Main Lines (having made themselves easy targets) were being penetrated by an imported Schleirmachian liberalism, which argued that heart religion need not have an historic resurrected Christ at its foundation. Perplexed, D.L. Moody took up the mantle of Finney, hired Ira Sankey to be his soul-stirring musician, and hit the sawdust trail. When he did, however, the notion of America-as-God's-Kingdom was left behind.

American Christianity was soon divided into two camps: the liberals and the fundamentalists. The liberals retained the idea of American exceptionalism—recast as manifest destiny and the Social Gospel—but jettisoned everything fundamentally Christian. The evangelicals, conversely, retained the "fundamentals" but jettisoned the millenarianism of their forebears in favor of an eschatological vision that expected things to get worse and worse, not progressively better. Dispensationalism, first brought ashore by John Nelson Darby (of the Irish dissenting group known as the Plymouth Brethren) during the 1860's, had enjoyed a small following among Adventists and maverick evangelicals before the Civil War. When the tide turned, however, dispensationalism became very attractive, and evangelical eschatology was reconstructed to reflect the "growing apostasy" in worldwide Christianity.

Unaware that they had imbibed the same sort of Baconian rationalism and historicism that their liberal opponents had, the dispensationalists were convinced that a commonsense reading of the Bible would reveal that God had divided all of human history into seven dispensations. In each of these, God would test mankind, man (save for a remnant of true believers) would fail, and a great disaster would follow. The sixth dispensation ("Law") had ended with the Jews' rejection of Jesus as their Messiah, after which Jesus began the dispensation of "Grace" (the seventh), also called the Church Age. During the Church Age (sprawling across the last two millennia), men would be saved by faith in Jesus Christ, and, at the end of this age, these Christians would be caught up into Heaven in a "secret rapture" and escape the disastrous "Tribulation" to follow. And, contrary to the Social Gospel of the liberals, no amount of so-

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cial engineering would change the degenerative course of history: "When they say peace and safety, then cometh sudden destruction."

The "Great Reversal," as it came to be known, meant that evangelicals increasingly withdrew from the sinking ship of mainstream American culture. It was pointless to hope for any lasting cultural renewal at the end of the Church Age. In fact, the signs of the times pointed to widespread degeneracy: Darwinism, liberal theology in the old universities, the failure of Prohibition, effeminacy (prohibitionist preacher Billy Sunday, the original Promise Keeper, championed "manliness" and decried wire-rimmed glasses), and illegitimacy. During the early 20th century, evangelicals began to hole up in their own denominations and schools and hold mass meetings to promote "the fundamentals" and dispensationalism. No one could attend such a spectacle as the International Prophecy Conference and walk away unconvinced that all who take the Bible seriously must agree with dispensationalism.

If not to American culture, where, then, would evangelical believers look to find visible signs that the end draweth nigh? The answer, first conceived by Darby in the absence of all earthly hope, was Israel and the Jews. God, having chosen the Jews to be His own—an ethnic group, not the spiritual descendants of Abraham, who could be raised up, if necessary, "out of stones"—would not abandon His people, despite their error. Thus, the dispensationalists taught that the Age of Law was not really completed during the first century A.D. but merely postponed. After the Church Age, circumscribed by the "great parentheses" of Providence, the Jews were to return to center stage in the divine drama and accept the Christ Whom they had rejected. With the Christians raptured and the Holy Ghost no longer restraining the forces of evil ("he who now letteth will let until he be taken out of the way"), a political leader (the Antichrist) would arise who would, over the course of seven years (the Tribulation) first broker a peace with the Jews, then turn on them and pursue them to destroy them, culminating in the Battle of Armageddon. Then, just as all hope for Israel seems lost, the Jews will "look up, for their redemption draweth nigh," as Jesus and the raptured believers return to destroy all their enemies. Here endeth the Tribulation and beginneth the dispensationalists' Millennium, during which Jesus shall reign over all the earth from Jerusalem and the raptured believers (in glorified, supernatural bodies) will share in His dominion, each according to his reward. This thousand-year reign will then close with (another) judgment, at which the Devil and all unbelievers will be consigned to Hell.

At the time when Darby, Rueben A. Torrey, C.I. Scofield (of the dispensationalist "Scofield Reference Bible"), and W.E. Blackstone were winning mass converts to dispensationalism, there was no nation of Israel. Hence, Blackstone, a resident of Oak Park, Illinois, and a friend of D.L. Moody, began holding "Christian Zionist" conferences in Chicago during the 1890's. His book, *Jesus Is Coming*, was a bestseller, and, in 1891, Blackstone drafted a petition demanding the creation of an Israeli state in Palestine, which was subsequently signed by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court; the speaker of the House, the mayors of Chicago, New York, and Boston; and such prominent figures as Cyrus McCormick, John D. Rockefeller, and J.P. Morgan. Blackstone, in 1918, was hailed "the father of Zionism," and, in 1956, the Israeli government named a forest after him.

After the Balfour Declaration (1917) and the demise of Ottoman rule in Palestine, the dispensationalists were all the more convinced that they had been right all along. Even the Nazi murder of so many Jews during the latter part of World War II was, ironically, seen by the dispensationalists as the work of God, preparing the way for the worldwide acceptance of an Israeli state in Palestine. Fundamentalist preacher Harry Rimmer said that, "by driving the preserved people back into the preserved land, Hitler, who does not believe the Bible . . . is helping to fulfill [it]."

In 1948, all doubt among evangelicals was eliminated, as Israel had, once again, entered her historic territory. Then, Jesus' words in Mark 13 rang true in the minds of the evangelical faithful:

> Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is near: So ye in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is nigh, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done.

In the midst of a hostile culture in which Bible-believers were mocked and marginalized, one thing was certain: The fig tree (Israel) had budded; therefore, the rapture was near. Evangelist Louis Talbot called the establishment of Israel "the greatest event, from a prophetic standpoint, that has taken place within the last one hundred years, perhaps even since 70 A.D. [*sic*], when Jerusalem was destroyed." Since 1948, dispensationalist leaders have praised every subsequent military action of the Israelis, no matter what it was or how it was conducted. After the Six-Day War of 1967, *Christianity Today* proclaimed that current events give "a student of the Bible a thrill and a renewed faith in the accuracy and validity of the Bible."

The single-greatest-selling book of the 1970's was dispensationalist Hal Lindsey's end-times novel *The Late Great Planet Earth*, in which the European Common Market was first fingered as the realm of the coming Antichrist. (The threat of Russia (Gog) and Moscow (Magog) was also factored in, and "fire and brimstone" was code for nuclear detonation.) Evangelical filmmakers at Mark IV Pictures began to produce end-times movies for evangelicals about the rapture, the Jews, and the Antichrist, with such titles as *A Thief in the Night*, *A Distant Thunder*, and *Image of the Beast*. These films were circulated among Christian youth groups and prophecy conferences, urging viewers to turn to Christ or miss the rapture. (Larry Norman, a pioneer of the genre that came to be known as "contemporary Christian music," penned the theme song for *Thief*: "I Wish We'd All Been Ready.")

Beginning with the Eisenhower Doctrine of 1957, Washington had supported Israel with aid and weapons, in an effort to counter the Soviets' influence on the Arab states of the Middle East, which, it was argued, could lead to the spread of communism throughout the region and the cutting off of the oil supply from Arab states. Washington's support for Israel had its political side as well, since it pleased Jewish voters in America. And, as more and more evangelicals began to be drawn into the fringes of the dominant American culture during the 50's and 60's, politicians took note of another voting constituency: Christian Zionists. Richard Nixon, under the influence of Henry Kissinger, agreed to support Israel for geopolitical reasons, though it only meant that the Israelis "would be even more im-

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possible to deal with than before." At the same time, he concurred, in the presence of dispensationalist evangelist Billy Graham, that, while neither of them particularly liked Jews, support for Israel was essential. He nodded along while Graham lamented (in the recently disclosed 1972 Oval Office meeting) that "all—I mean, not all the Jews, but a lot of the Jews are great friends of mine, they swarm around me and are friendly to me because they know that I'm friendly with Israel. But they don't know how I really feel about what they are doing to this country."

A growing number of Republicans began to see the need for a presidential candidate who could translate the evangelicals' earnest theological commitment to Israel into an electoral victory. Ronald Reagan had said in 1971 that, "In the 38th chapter of Ezekiel, it says that the land of Israel will come under attack by the armies of the ungodly nations, and it says that Libya will be among them. Do you understand the significance of that? Libya has now gone communist, and that's a sign that the day of Armageddon isn't far off." Bolstered by popular dispensationalist televangelists—Falwell, Robertson, Oral Roberts, Jimmy Swaggart, all of whom had led pilgrimages to Israel—Reagan was able to bring the evangelicals into the Republican Party for good while securing his victories in 1980 and 1984. In the process, American evangelicals were able to add the old Puritan commitment to American exceptionalism to their apocalyptic theology. The United States, upholding her godly heritage, would be the protector of God's chosen people, while the Soviets and the nations of Europe conspired against them, bringing the world to the brink of the rapture.

Since then, dispensationalist fervor has only increased. In 1993, popular evangelical author Timothy LaHaye, along with Christian fiction writer Jerry B. Jenkins, published a new rapture novel, *Left Behind*, which topped the *New York Times*' bestseller list. Since then, there have been nine more novels, with the 11th, *Armageddon*, scheduled to be released on April 8. Over 42 million of these books have been sold; two film versions, starring evangelical Hollywood actors, have been made, and a third is currently in production.

Evangelicals are now fully enmeshed in Republican politics, and—no matter how many times the GOP lets them down when it comes to abortion, homosexual rights, or cloning—they will always return to the party that most visibly and vocally supports Israel. In October 2002, Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition held its Christian Solidarity Rally For Israel in front of the White House, and, in addition to the mayor of Jerusalem, many Republican politicians came to deliver five-minute speeches. The schedule included numerous senators and congressmen: Dick Armey, J.C. Watts, Strom Thurmond, Jesse Helms, Tom DeLay, James Inhofe, Lindsey Graham, Ernest Istook, Roy Blunt, Bob Goodlatte, Sam Brownback, Orrin Hatch, Robert Aderholt, Dave Weldon, Henry Brown, and Walter Jones.

Not all Republican politicians are cynical manipulators of the evangelicals' love for Israel. Lindsey Graham, himself an ardent dispensationalist, declared at the October 2002 rally, "There are people in the world today who want to destroy Israel. Those people will be my enemy forever. Those people who want to bring about peace—come join us." Graham, along with his dispensational brethren, knows that Israel is part of God's plan and is, therefore, indestructible, a delusion that is highly dangerous, considering Israel's geopolitical situation. Thus, he called on the United States to "send a signal that's undeniable, unquestionable to all the forces of evil that you will not destroy the state of Israel. If that is your goal, you will lose."

Dispensationalist House Majority Leader Tom Delay shares Graham's belief: "I've been to Masada. I've toured Judea and Samaria. I've walked the streets of Jerusalem, and I've stood on the Golan Heights. . . . And you know what? I didn't see any occupied territory. What I saw was Israel!" In other words, since God has given the land of Israel to the Jews, there can be no Palestinian state. The Palestinians simply do not have any claim to the land on which they have lived for 2,000 years. And anyone who disagrees will suffer the wrath of God.

Divided loyalties such as these are nothing but a recipe for disaster in the realm of foreign policy. "Best friends" Benjamin Netanyahu and Ariel Sharon do not have the American interest at heart: Instead, they (rightly) have their own. Then again, the Republicans, by and large, do not have the dispensationalists' best interests at heart, either. They have their own geopolitical goals, which, thanks to the overwhelming influence of the neoconservatives, happen to coincide on the surface with the evangelicals'. These sincere Christians will never be awakened from this eschatological nightmare by politics. They must be led back to the path of orthodoxy by Christians immersed in the traditions of the Church, which teach that the next event on "God's calendar" is the Judgment, for which we all must be prepared. On this, the Fathers, Augustine, Thomas, Luther, and Calvin agreed. But are there enough Lutherans, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and Catholics left who are sufficiently familiar with this rich heritage to explain it, lovingly and patiently, to their brethren? Or, in Jesus' words, "When the Son of Man returns, will He find faith on the earth?"

C

44th Street (circa 1983)

by Lawrence Dugan

Just two blocks from trash-can parties
Are the Algonquin and Sardi's,
And so the thread-bare elbow rubs
Those from the Harvard and Yale clubs,
And whether you look up or down
Depends upon your class of frown . . .
You ignore neon lights that flash
Near the young moron selling hash,
Who takes your measure and grins,
So sure he knows the hand that spins
The world around each day; each breath
Pulls his spirit closer to death.
He bottles up his soul at night,
And counts silver by its dying light.

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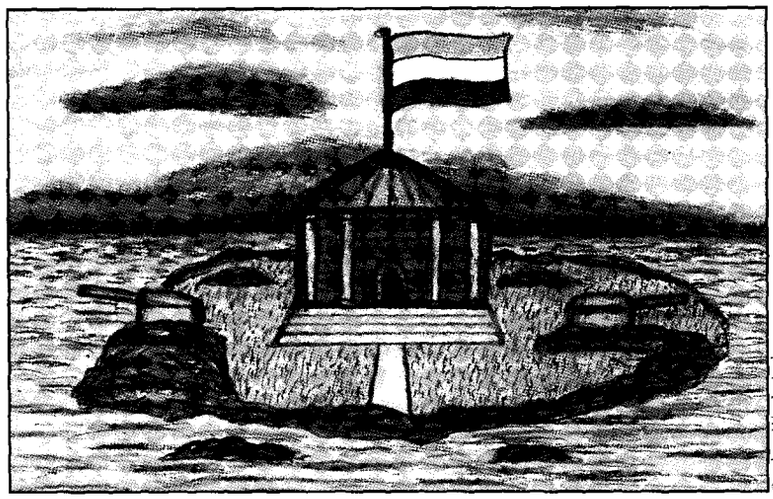
Nationalism *Über Alles*

A Study in Definition

by Alain de Benoist



Stephen Wirtz Anderson

There are probably as many theories of nationalism as there are nationalisms. Quite apart from the often extremely complex typologies used to classify nationalism, there are two principal definitions worth noting.

In the first sense, *nationalism* is defined as a more or less voluntary aspiration of a people to establish itself as a nation, whether or not there is any objective foundation for it. This aspiration, which most often takes shape when a group feels alienated from a larger group, is then presented as a movement of historical construction. In the second sense, *nationalism* is the political doctrine that insists that a government must concern itself, above all, with the national interest.

The first form of nationalism often stems from, in the words of Carl Schmitt, the "state of exception"—that is, as a reaction to a threat, real or imagined, that would prevent the collective identity from being established. For example, nationalism can manifest itself either in reaction to foreign occupation or colonization, or as part of the framework of exaggerated regionalism. Its essence is, therefore, defined by conflict. It requires an enemy, but this enemy can take on diverse forms. Thus, various nationalisms have been both modern and antimodern, intellectual as well as popular, leftist and rightist. (During the entire 19th century, nationalism was essentially liberal and republican.)

As a political doctrine, nationalism raises other problems. Once an identity has been recovered, or a nation has made its appearance, how can nationalism truly serve as a principle of government? "National interest" is vague. Charles Maurras wrote that a nationalist "subordinates his feelings, his interests, and his way of life to the good of the country." But what political faction would disagree? "The good of the nation" is a concept to which everyone can lay claim, all the more so since everyone has his own interpretation of it. The risk, then, is great that a nationalist government could only exist by engaging in new areas of conflict. Every foreigner, for example, will potentially be regarded as an enemy. And confronting the enemy within would result in a civil war, which nationalist theory would seem to forbid on principle.

The concept of nationalism, then, remains obscure. Nationalist movements can be observed worldwide, but they have, for the most part, little in common. In fact, they are usually opposed to one another; they lay claim to contradictory values. Everything points to the probability that nationalism is more a form than a substance, more a container than any specific content.

It is easier to understand nationalism if we clarify its relationship to the idea of the nation, from which it cannot be separated. Nationalism represents a political appropriation of the nation. But the nation is only one form of polity among others, and it is a specifically modern one.

Neither the Gallic resistance to Julius Caesar nor the campaign of Arminius and his Germans against Varus's legions was nationalist in the modern sense. Applying the word *nation*, whether to antiquity or to the *ancien régime*, involves an anachronism. In the Middle Ages, the nation (*natio*, Latin for "birth") had a cultural or ethnic sense, not a political one. During the Hundred Years War between France and England, *patriotism* referred to the country (*patria*)—that is, both to the native soil and to a constellation of intermediate bodies that define a shared identity in concrete terms.

In the political sense, the concept of the nation did not appear until the 18th century, when it was used to express opposition to the king. At that time, the patriots were those who thought that the nation, not the king, incarnated the unity of the country—that the nation existed independently of the kingdom. The nation united those who agreed politically and philosophically.

It is in this sense that Barrère, at the Convention, could say

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that "the aristocrats have no country [*patrie*]." The nation is thus perceived, first, as the sovereign people; then, as the populations that acknowledge the authority of the same state, inhabit the same territory, and see themselves as members of the same political unity; and, finally, as that political unity itself. Article 3 of the *Declaration of the Rights of Man* states that "The principle of all sovereignty resides essentially in the nation."

The *ancien régime* in France had already gone a long way toward centralizing political power. The French Revolution continued this process in a new form. Its goal was "to produce the nation," to create a new social bond, to generate patterns of social behavior that would give rise to the nation as a political body made up of equal individuals. From that point on, states became the producers of society, and this production is built upon the ruins of intermediate social bodies. Beginning with the French Revolution, the nation is, for every individual, a fact or given that allows no mediating structures between individual and state. It is a collective abstraction to which one belongs directly, without the mediation of other social bodies or of other states.

> "My country, right or wrong" says that my country can be right *or* wrong, not that it is *always right*.

There is, paradoxically, an individualist root for the idea of nationalism. As Louis Dumont observed:

> The nation, in the precise modern sense of the term, and nationalism—as opposed to simple patriotism—have been historically allied with the value of individualism. Not only does the one accompany the other historically, but the interdependence between them is such that one could say that the nation is a global society composed of people who consider themselves individuals.

This "modernity" of the nation and of nationalism remained unnoticed for a long time—at first, because nationalism has sometimes also been born in reaction to the social and political dysfunctions that emerged from modernity; later, because the political right, from the end of the 19th century, employed the idea of the nation in order to oppose socialist-internationalist movements.

This individualist and modern basis of the concept of the nation explains how nationalism fits under the umbrella of metaphysical subjectivity. Martin Heidegger explored the subjective basis of nationalism and internationalism, observing that "collectivism is the subjectivity of man on the plane of totality." He also showed that political universalism ("pure internationalism") does not fundamentally contradict nationalism. The classic definition of extreme ethnocentrism is "a particular enlarged to universal dimensions." Universalism, conversely, is ethnocentrism in disguise. The particular, not content with testifying to its own truth, tends to present itself as truth *per se*. Such is the basis for the claim made by certain peoples to be "elect"—called to fulfill a universal mission.

France has not escaped this temptation; indeed, it has succumbed more often than other nations. Guizot used to declare, "France is the heart of civilization." Lavisse added, "our fatherland is the most humane of fatherlands," implying that there are various degrees of humanity. In fact, it has often been said that French nationalism would not know how to be fundamentally intolerant, because, in France, the concept of the nation is directed toward humanity. But this statement should give us pause. In such a case, the concept of humanity is also directed toward the nation. Whoever does not belong to the nation finds himself excluded from humanity.

Not every demand for collective identity is expressed in terms of nationalism. Such a confusion of the two would end up—as we can see in the historic examples of nationalism's excesses—casting doubt on the value of the entire concept of collective identity. But such a concept, whatever its basis and however expressed, is indispensable to human society. In communist societies, this sense of identity enabled people to survive, by opposing their real identity to the one that the regime was trying to impose. In Western societies, collective identity continues to nourish the imagination and to give meaning to the will to lead a common life. Nationalism, to the extent that it is more tumultuous and more competitive, is no more the inevitable consequence of affirming collective identity than the nation is the only political organization that can express citizenship. It is, rather, the denial of collective identities, such as people encountered during the 20th century under both communism and liberalism, that caused their return in irredentist forms that were convulsive and destructive.

To be more precise, there are two different ways of expressing collective identity. The first, which might be called the nationalist way, is confined to an individual's defense of his own people, while the second, which is particularly solicitous for diversity, sees the necessity of defending all peoples against the ideologues who threaten to eradicate them. The English phrase, "My country, right or wrong," is often misunderstood. It does not declare merely that belonging to a country is a given that cannot be turned into an abstraction. It also says that my country can be right *or* wrong, not that it is *always right*. A nationalist, however, would not know how to recognize that his country is in the wrong, for the simple reason that, for him to be able to declare his country wrong, he would have to possess a criterion of the just and unjust that went beyond the mere fact of belonging to a group. In other words, he would have to possess a clear awareness of what constitutes objective truth. A nationalist is spontaneously led to believe that his country is never wrong, that it is always right. From such a perspective, when conflict arises, force alone can decide the matter. Force becomes the supreme value. It is identified with the true, which means that history is fundamentally just: Conquerors are always right, for the sole reason that they have prevailed. Paradoxically, nationalism falls back into Social Darwinism, which is nothing but another form of the ideology of progress. If, by contrast, I can declare my country in the wrong—without, for one moment, forgetting that it is my country—then I know that my belonging is not a criterion of objective reality. At that point, I depart from the metaphysical subjectivity where nationalism and liberal individualism come together. The identity of other people is no longer, in principle, a threat to my own. I am ready to defend my identity because such a defense is a general principle whose legitimacy I also acknowledge for others. If I defend my tribe, I am also ready, for the same reason, to defend the tribes of other people. C

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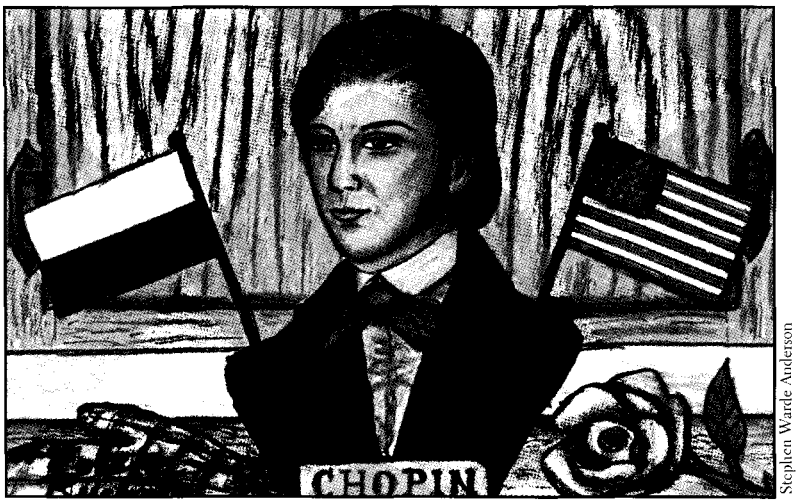
Leokadia and Fireflies

A Story

by Anthony Bukoski



Stephen Wardle Anderson

Named Stefanie Karawinski, I'm seventeen years old. The woman in the title of the story, Sister Mary Leokadia, is perhaps fifty. Because the nuns at my grade school here in Superior wear black habits and white, scarf-like wimples covering their hair and ears, I can't tell their ages. They belong to an order founded for Polish and Polish-American women: the Sisters of St. Joseph of the Third Order of St. Francis, whose main convent is in Stevens Point, Wisconsin, where I'd stop on the way to Milwaukee if it weren't so far out of the way.

Though this story is about my family, and principally about my dad, and has only a little to do with Sister Leokadia, I'm still naming it for her. Because the nuns do so much for us, and yet remain in the background of our lives, credit is due them. I'm entering Marquette University in the fall partly because of the nuns. Though after attending *Szkoła Wojciecha*, St. Adalbert's grade school, I went to a public high school, I'd still see the nuns in church; they'd have me do odd jobs for them at school, and sometimes Sister Leokadia would visit our house. Because she's a holy presence in the neighborhood, this story is named for her, the nun who taught me in seventh and eighth grades.

I'd never name a story for myself. I shouldn't even use "I" so much, but how else to describe yourself when you're a character in your story? I have medium-length light-brown hair with bangs. In back, my hair is straight, trimmed evenly across. I wish I were as pretty as Mother. I try to be modest in speech and dress, to read a lot, to study writing in the months before college. A tall girl, I blush when teased. I have pale skin. Who isn't pale in June with winter not long over in Northern Wisconsin? I wear glasses for all the reading I do. A photo of Stefanie Karawinski, author and minor character in this, her family's story, would show an average girl, plain in appearance, which is true.

I live with my parents and Dziaduś, Grandpa, a retired seaman in poor health, in a house in the East End. So you'll know both the heredity *and* environment that shape my life, I'll describe the two lower floors of our house, starting with the basement, where dustwebs catch on thin plastic window curtains. In the basement fourteen years ago, Dad built plywood cabinets. During winter, the basement—which, in other seasons, is damp and cool—is the warmest place in the house, for in the center stands a furnace converted to burn natural gas. Tin vents rise through the house carrying warm air to us up here, too. Along with the basement workbench and the furnace are the washing machine, laundry tub, scrub board, and the old coal bin, now made into a storage room. Sometimes even on Memorial Day, the furnace comes on.

Most of our time is spent upstairs, where the cabinets Dad built hang above the sink on one wall and above the refrigerator on another. Other cabinets stand next to the stove. We probably have more plywood cabinets in our kitchen than any household in East End. The door frames and the doors to the back porch and the dining room, wainscoting, baseboards, and other wooden kitchen surfaces are painted with ivory-colored enamel. The kitchen wallpaper is yellow. But what you recall about the kitchen is the plywood cabinets with the clear, reddish-brown stain on them to bring out their grain. I hardly remember the days Dad built them, but I know it took strength for him

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to work eight-hour shifts at the shipyard, then come home to care for the house—painting it, changing storm windows, cutting the grass outside—then to go down the basement to his cabinet project. I think he is the strongest man alive.

Here are four reasons for my thinking this: His gruff boss, who doesn't shave and can't pronounce Polish names, thinks Dad, because of our last name, likes to be called "Car Wash." When the boss yells, "Car Wash, do this," "Car Wash, do that," Dad smiles. Everyone believes Dad's good-natured; but I think his smile means he's stronger than most for not losing his temper, which he has a right to lose, considering he had a life-threatening accident in the same shipyard where the boss makes fun of him. Self-possession is one of Dad's great strengths, and there are others. Example two, for instance: He labors all year in cold and snow, heat and pouring rain. Or example three: In addition to being called Car Wash and working in bad weather, he suffers another insult in silence: Across the highway from the Great Lakes freighter the men are lengthening in dry dock stands a Greyhound bus. Nothing else is there but the Greyhound, which a 1940's baseball team or band toured in—no buildings, no trees, just the broken-down bus with flat tires that someone parked in the field. On a piece of cardboard over the smashed front window, the owner has written, "POLISH SKI TEAM."

Stanley "Car Wash" Karawinski says nothing about this. Nor, for my fourth example of his strength, did he say a word when I went with him on his bicycle to The Alibi Tavern and a drunk yelled, "Hey, Car Wash, you're Polack, right?" When Dad didn't respond, the guy said, "Well, a Polack's nothin' more than a sand-blasted nigger." Though I was only thirteen at the time, I thought about telling the drunken man to be careful who he was talking to, but Dad laughed and left with a bottle of brandy for Grandfather.

He looked shaken on the way home, his face set in the grim smile he's had since the accident. "He shouldn't call black people that or call us Polacks," he said.

When we parked his bike in the garage, he was bothered he hadn't answered the guy in The Alibi. Yet I know a strong man can have a peaceful heart. Violence would have done no good. Though he didn't stand up for himself, I knew my father had honor and integrity. No matter if people called us Polacks, he always cared enough about the country of our ancestors to fly the Polish flag in our yard. Today, we also have a decal on our front window—over a red eagle, the word *SOLIDARNOŚĆ*, SOLIDARITY, in white letters; for in Poland this year, the Communist government raises food prices and dismisses workers from shipyards and coal mines and keeps Solidarity leaders in concentration camps. Dad cares about this because he is also Polish and works in a shipyard, where he pedals to work on Mother's old bicycle, a Schwinn with thick tires, a blue frame and fenders, and a white seat. In bad weather, Tony Stromko gives him a ride.

But I should describe the rest of our house. On the table in our dining room stands a statue of the Virgin Mary; under Her is a lace tablecloth. Thinking that the Blessed Virgin had Her favorite television programs, when I was young I used to turn Her statue toward the TV room next to the dining room. Now Grandfather, who has emphysema and needs his privacy, lives in that room. For the Mother of God, there's not much to watch on TV, anyway. Behind the crucifix on the dining-room wall, my mother tucks the palm frond after Palm Sunday Mass; and in the TV room are Dziaduś's bed, an end table with a lamp on it, and a commode, because it's hard for him to get to the bathroom during the night.

We call the last downstairs room the "front room." If you look in from the yard through the picture window, you'll see a piano, phonograph, sofa, desk (on it a framed picture of Dad as a young man when he was still O.K. before the accident), comfortable chairs, and a large wall mirror. If you look out the window, you'll see Washington Park stretch from 4th to 5th Street and from 25th Avenue East to the railroad tracks that run to the Fredericka Flour Mill. This is the downstairs of a house of memory.

Because Dad can't talk much on the job, he keeps everything stored up till suppertime, when out come the most beautiful stories as well as fantastic tales that a soon-to-be Marquette freshman shouldn't believe, like the one about Mr. Novotny, who wore a hook on his arm after an industrial accident. How can you anticipate a story like this?—that Mr. Novotny welded his hook to the bumper of a car. Yet Dad insists it happened. He says: "I heard him calling, 'Help! Someone help!' The poor, drunken Novotny is crying when he sees me. His shirt's greasy, his pants sliding down his hips. 'Get me loose, Car Wash,' he says. Giving a pull where Captain Hook welded himself to the bumper, I broke him free." (The indentation in Dad's forehead from the accident grows shallower as he tells us the story.) "So he stands up, thanks me, stumbles out the garage door, reaches up with his hook to clamp himself to the clothes line he rigged from there to the house, and guides himself by the rope across the yard to the back porch."

"It's a safety line for drunks," Grandfather says.

By now, Dziaduś and I don't know what is true or false. Then Dad tells the story of how, when he was sailing on the Great Lakes ore carrier *Arthur M. Anderson*, the ship was inundated by migrating warblers that settled on the deck at dusk, awoke at dawn, then flew on their journey north. "Thing is," Dad says, "they lost ground because we were going *southwest*."

This is the mysterious "Car Wash," the storyteller—Stanley Karawinski, who stands six-feet-one-inches tall, shoulders slumped when he walks, who has a twist of brown hair partly covering his forehead and a ruddy face from working outside. He hears rumors and gossip and wants exciting things to happen to him, though how could he have been at Novotny's and at work at the same time? I give him the benefit of the doubt concerning the truth of his stories. On the other hand, why was he quiet in The Alibi Tavern or after Sunday Mass when people stood out front of church? Mother does all the socializing there. I think Dad is "slow" from what happened to him when a gantry crane dropped a hull plate to the earth; hitting the ground, it banged against a smaller crane and struck him. Then, I reassure myself that because he rides a bike with a wicker basket tied to the handlebars, doesn't hurry his speech, and usually only talks at home doesn't mean anything bad. Figuring he's still capable of accomplishing big things in life, I apply a saying to him Dziaduś taught me: "*Krowa co dużo ryczy, mało mleka daje*" ("Great talkers are little doers"). Outside of our home, Dad is no talker.

Last week, while we were waiting for him to come home from work, Mother was preparing supper, Dziaduś was at the table, and I was in the pantry off of the kitchen thinking back on high school, specifically how one teacher says reading Polish names is like reading an eye chart. After you heard it a

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thousand times—Polish names equals eye chart—it wasn't funny. Right off in our freshman year, he shortened Zawistowski to "Zowie," Kiszewski to "Kazoo," Waletzko to "Waldo," which is like what happens to Dad's name at the shipyard. This is the same teacher who, if you wrote a confusing sentence on the board, called it a "Polish sentence" in front of everyone, no matter if you were Polish or not.

Trying to forget all that, I went to the kitchen table, where Dziaduś read the Marine Vessel Traffic part of the newspaper to see which Polish ships were upbound from Sault Ste. Marie to the Port of Superior. Boats with names like *Ziemia Chełmińska*, *Pomorze Zachodnie*, *Zakopane*, and *Ziemia Bialostocka* have put in here a hundred times to load grain and flaxseed. Dziaduś was like the harbormaster of our house, the way he knew everything about the port. I couldn't get mad at him; for when he looked at me, it was like he was asking, "Why am I a widower? Why are my lungs failing? Why are my days at sea over? Why did my son get hurt in the shipyard?" When Dziaduś tapped his fingers on the tabletop, I got his watch or fetched his sweater from the armchair. "Can I do anything else for you, Grandfather?"

"It's hard to breathe in here. There's nothing anybody can do," he replied.

"I know. Is there a Polish boat in this week?"

"*Ziemia Gniezńieńska* at Harvest States Elevator," he might say. "Let's talk when there's more air."

"I'd like to talk about the boats with you," I told him.

Then I started thinking *why* about my own life. I was sick of hearing our names look like eye charts, of hearing about "Polish sentences." I even heard a radio disk jockey announcing the winners of free concert tickets say, on the air, "another frickin' Polack name" when he stumbled over a good name ending in *czyk*. Why do people say such things when my father spent a year on a gunboat on a river in South Vietnam; when Dziaduś sailed waters patrolled by German U-boats during World War II; when ten Polish seamen have jumped ship in Superior to start a new life here; when, on this very day, coal miners and shipyard and transit workers are fighting the communists in Poland? How can someone joke about such strong men? Of all ethnic groups, the Polish seemed to be the ones people got away with ridiculing.

Having put supper in the oven, Mother was in the front room listening to the phonograph, a polonaise by Chopin. She said it expressed Polish peoples' courage and spirit. The polonaise reminded me of her. So did a prelude called "The Revolutionary," which Chopin wrote in Paris to honor the 1831 Polish Uprising against the Russians. A dreamlike nocturne reminded me of my father. I was too young to know much of what he was like before the accident, but I knew I admired him for what he'd been through.

Nocturne

Prelude

Polonaise

Once, on the gym stage, before a program the nuns sponsored, Sister Leokadia placed a bust of Chopin on a pedestal. I'd come to turn the pages while she played. After she finished practicing the piano, she told me to wait for her while she went to get something. When she returned, she gave me a yellow rose to place on the pedestal. The American and Polish flags stood on either side of the bust. "Go ahead, Stefa," she said. After I put the rose before the great composer (as I will present my father a rose some day when I show him my Marquette diploma), I touched the stars on the blue field of the American flag and held the red-and-white Polish flag. Kissing both flags, I heard Chopin's music in the still air. He is dear to the hearts of Polish people. In the national anthem of Poland, which begins "*Jeszcze Polska nie zginęła*" ("Oh, our Poland shall not perish, while we live to love her"), you hear the strains of a polonaise. Polish money has Chopin's picture on it. A famous statue of him stands in Lazienki Park in Warsaw.

With summer passing, I was thinking, as Mother played Chopin on the phonograph, how I'd miss the house, the nuns, and my family when I went to college. Then the door opened, and the bicycle rider stepped in.

A stranger stood on the back porch. Looking like he was thirty-five or forty, he wore a sailor's blue watch cap, his hair sticking out from under it. A brown suit coat hung off his shoulders, the cuffs pinned under to shorten them. A cream-colored shirt stood out from beneath the coat. As I was thinking how out of place the man looked, Dad said, "*Gość w dom, Bóg w dom*" ("A guest in the house is like God in the house").

"Who's this?" asked Mother. She was always patient with Dad. Smelling cigarette smoke on his clothes, she knew he'd been drinking somewhere.

"He's off a ship. We were in The Warsaw Tavern. There's an article in the paper. 'Immigration mum on ship-jumper.'"

"That's the Polish boat *Ziemia Gniezńieńska* that was in port," Dziaduś said.

When Dad grows excited, Mother has to calm him. "We have a Polish sailor right here," he was saying proudly.

"Pleace, I am . . . " said the man. Leaning against the sink, he looked sorrowful, beaten-down.

"No more beer, Stanley," Mother said to my dad, trying to coax him into his usual routine of telling stories.

"Here's a story for tonight," Dad said. "Tell us what happened to you, Wiktor Urbaniak."

Unsure of his place in our midst, one minute the sailor tried to stand up straight and smile at us. The next, his forehead would wrinkle, he'd look angry, his shoulders would slump. "*Buk-ser*," he said. "I am in America six days. If I stay until ship leaves, then Immigration Office not so much problem for me. There would be no way to go for me to Poland. When I left ship, I shouted 'Kommuneest!' at the captain, crazy man yelling down from bow. Instead of taking the taxicab, I am ending up with longshoreman who I am lucky was in his car watching. Now I am reported to Immigration and Naturalization. *Buk-ser, Buk-ser*," he repeated.

Dad got a bottle of beer for himself and for our visitor. "Ten sailors have jumped ship here in five years," Dad said. "All in Superior, and I've never seen one till now."

"No beer for either of you," Mother said. "And that sailor is already drunk."

"But I have to join him in Solidarity, Helen."

When Dad finished sipping his beer, he went in the dining room, returning with his camera and with articles he'd been saving about shipyard workers in Gdańsk. "I'm also a shipyard laborer," he told the sailor. "I've been keeping up with your history like we're one and the same. I've got a Solidarity sticker in the window."

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The sailor signaled me to get him another beer. I was afraid not to. He had scars where his eyebrows joined the temples. He had a mark on his forehead. It was like his face had been smashed up.

Dad pointed to his own forehead where you could see the effects of the accident. "See where I got hurt? Did the Secret Service do that to your face? Helen, take a picture of us."

"*Buk-ser*," said the seaman.

"I had an accident," Dad said. "Hull plate missed killing me. I got banged up."

"If you want to stay in the U.S., you better not drink so much," Mother said to Wiktor Urbaniak. "You'll need to go to INS again."

"Helen, Stefa," Dad said, "you don't know what's happening in your own kitchen. This is history taking place with him here. They arrest people in Poland all the time. I have an interest in things as a shipyard laborer. I know they can't beat down our spirit."

"You don't know Solidarity from the dairy store," Mother said.

"*Buk-ser*," said the sailor.

"By golly—here, stand by the stove so people will know it's in our kitchen we took the picture," Dad said. "Make a *V* for Victory and smile. Here, hold this, too." It was an oven mitt that said "*Polska Kuchnia*," which means "Polish kitchen."

Ringed by the stove, refrigerator, plywood cabinets, the sailor tucked his square jaw into his chest. He swung a fist as though trying to loosen up his arms and shoulders.

As Mother said, "I know what he's saying. He means he's been a 'boxer.'" Dad said "Solidarity" and whistled the "Hymn to Solidarity" that the Gdańsk workers rally around.

When Dad extended his hand to him, Wiktor Urbaniak's hand came back in a way Dad didn't expect. The sailor had had enough picture-taking. Not yet realizing what the drunk sailor meant by the word, when my father said "*buk-ser*," Wiktor Urbaniak put up his guard.

Dad blocked the punch the sailor threw. It was as though Mr. Urbaniak off the *Ziemia Gniezńieńska* was shadowboxing.

"What's he punching anything for?" asked Mother.

"To show his solidarity with me," Dad said.

Moving his head from side to side, the sailor looked between his fists, oven mitt on one hand. "Problem?" he said, pronouncing it "*Pdob-lem*," as he threw another punch that missed.

When my father dropped his guard, saying, "Hold on a second; I said 'Solidarity,'" a fist connected. Dad's eye swelled. He got hit again. I heard the wind rush out of him as he muttered "Poland." Trying to clear out what he'd just learned, my dad shook his head. Tasting his bloody lip with his tongue, he was saying, "There's been a mistake."

When Dad's smile returned, Mother, angry, said to the sailor, "He's not right. Can't you see? Why do you think his forehead's like that and he rides a bicycle everywhere? He's not been O.K. for fourteen years. His daughter is the only one who can't see that," she said, pointing to me. Then, to the sailor, she said, "You're getting out. Come on. We don't want you here, Solidarity or not."

I didn't know where they took the sailor. As my dad washed his face, trying to sober up, Mother and Dziaduś drove Wiktor Urbaniak back to The Warsaw Tavern or to the immigration office. I didn't care where, not while Dad sat at the kitchen table talking to himself, head in his hands. He couldn't figure what'd happened, but I knew that a drunken immigrant seeking asylum didn't care what "Car Wash" Karawinski thought about world affairs. They lived in different countries.

Seeing Dad bewildered, I wanted to do what Sister encouraged us to do in our lives. She'd say it over and over, "*Nigdy nie przegap okazji, żeby powiedzieć komua ze go kochasz*" ("Never waste an opportunity to tell someone you love them"). But I couldn't do that right now, not when he was so busy shaking his head as he tried to explain things to himself. He was talking in a whisper about Gdańsk, about The Alibi Tavern, the shipyard . . . everything that made him feel special.

When he said he was all right and wanted to be alone for awhile, I went out to the garage for his bike. With Grandfather and Mother still away and my dad resting, there was no one to talk to. The house and yard were quiet. A far-off train whistle made me lonely. What did all this mean? I wondered as I rode the bike across the lawn to the front sidewalk. By the time I turned toward St. Adalbert's School, it was dark. You could smell lilacs, and I was glad to be out of the house. There'd been drinking and rough talking in our Polish kitchen. Dad had been embarrassed he couldn't stick up for himself. I figured what happened would cure him of the need to talk after work. Earlier, during the drunken chatter, he told us that Alphonse Zukowski, a Polish man who ran the auto-body repair shop on Winter Street, owned the Polish Ski Team bus. I guess Mr. Zukowski thought it was harmless for Polish people to laugh at themselves or to be laughed at by non-Polish people.

It made *me* laugh knowing Mr. Zukowski's joke was on us Poles. As I rode along, I thought someone like Mr. Zukowski wouldn't care for Chopin. And, regarding my father, the joke was on *me*, on Stefanie—"Stefancha," if you pronounce it the Polish way. I never wanted to admit my dad was slow, that he was confused by things. Once I acknowledged it, I laughed all four blocks to Sister Leokadia. When I arrived, I wasn't laughing anymore, for *she* knew what was courageous and noble in a spirit like my father's. Sister Leokadia knew everything.

As I walked across the school lawn, I could hear through the open gym window Sister practicing a nocturne, my father's music. The nocturne was moving and sad—like Poland must be this night. As the music rose into the darkness, I wondered whether the great Chopin heard it in heaven, whether Dziaduś and Mother heard it, whether Stanley "Car Wash" Karawinski heard it at home in our Polish kitchen. A laborer confused by things people took for granted, my dad's only fault was he had to tell the stories most people didn't want to hear. In doing so, he thought he'd make himself into someone he wasn't. I hoped he'd forgive me for thinking this about him; but I am his daughter, Stefancha the storyteller, and maybe when accidents happen to me, a nocturne will express who I am, too.

Nocturne

Prelude

Polonaise

As I entered the St. Adalbert's gymnasium and saw Sister with a rose for Chopin, I knew I'd remember how, to honor her, fireflies came out for the first time that summer. I also knew that, during this evening, I'd tell Dad the saying Sister Leokadia had taught us. "Never waste an opportunity to tell someone you love them." I would bow to my father and tell him this in Polish. C

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Bada Bing, Bada Bang, Bada Boom

by J.O. Tate

"It was wonderful to find America, but it would have been more wonderful to miss it."
—S.L. Clemens

The Psychology of the Sopranos: Love, Death, Desire, and Betrayal in America's Favorite Gangster Family
by Glen O. Gabbard, M.D.
New York: Basic Books; 191 pp., $22.00

A Sitdown With the Sopranos: Watching Italian American Culture on T.V.'s Most Talked-About Series
edited by Regina Barreca
New York: Palgrave Macmillan; 179 pp., $12.95

The Sopranos on the Couch: Analyzing Television's Greatest Series
by Maurice Yacowar
New York & London: The Continuum International Publishing Group; 204 pp., $18.95

This Thing of Ours: Investigating the Sopranos
edited by David Lavery
New York: Columbia University Press; 285 pp., $17.95

Tony Soprano's America: The Criminal Side of the American Dream
by David Simon
Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press; 274 pp., $25.00

◆

Stephen Warde Anderson

In California, two brothers ages 20 and 15, murdered their mother and then cut off her head and hands, after which they were seen trying to unload a package with a foot sticking out of it into a dumpster. Her body was later found in a ravine; her head and hands were discovered in the boys' bedroom. She had been heard screaming at her younger son about housework—and then there was silence. The boys got the idea from the last episode of the fourth season of *The Sopranos*, in which Ralphie Cifarello is killed by Tony Soprano and then relieved of his head and hands to make identification difficult. Though there seems to have been a rush to blame television—specifically, *The Sopranos*—for this crime, I have a different interpretation: No mother, whether living in California or not, should, in the present environment, raise her voice at her son about housework—or anything else, for that matter. (Am I the only person who remembers the Menendez brothers?)

Shown on HBO for the last four years, *The Sopranos* has been a megahit. The series has attracted a devoted audience and given rise to extended commentary and analysis. These books address themselves to the first three seasons of *The Sopranos* and, thus, neglect the relative disappointment of the fourth season. There was a falling-off of tension, and, for many, the final violence did not justify the tedium of the wait. Nevertheless, die-hard *Soprano* devotees are hoping for a big finish in a fifth and final season, and there has been talk of a feature film. The story of *The Sopranos* is not over.

Having seduced a mass audience with insidious appeal, the show has made the opprobrium that has been attributed to it seem irrelevant. These objections come in two forms. One is the aversion to graphic sex and violence and to obscene language. There is a lot of both on the show, but the complaint is, finally, a weak one, for two reasons. First, the objection to sex, violence, and obscenity was steamrolled by Hollywood and popular culture in the 1960's and since. Second, violence and bad language in *The Sopranos* are controlled by contextual irony. To present is not to advocate; otherwise, we might have a case for censoring Shakespeare (as has indeed been done). Ultimately, this is an objection to television itself, which had discreetly embraced extremity long before *The Sopranos* came along. The show is not the problem but the solution to the problematics of television, being more "moral" and more "real" than the routine obscenities broadcast by buffed bimbos with collagen-puffed lips, who daily recite more grossness on the news than is displayed by Tony Soprano and family.

The second, and more interesting, objection is that *The Sopranos* stereotypes Italian-Americans. Owing to a tradition of gangster movies, Italian-Americans

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have been given a raw deal by popular culture. This limited and limiting view, however, tends to play to the political maneuvering of identity politics. After all, it was the mobster Joe Columbo, Sr., himself who organized an Italian-American Defamation League and was shot at a rally of the propaganda front that he had the gall to gather. (So much for self-deception in playing the victim card.) The stereotyping *is* the point, not beside the point: The characters are trapped in their own limitations. Besides, the success story of the Italians in America is manifest, and, for every Michael Corleone, there is a Ray Romano. The sensitivity of some Italian-Americans seems excessive when we consider the American obsession with Italian cuisine and music, and, even more, the American obsession with sagas of the Mob. That fascination is more sympathetic than indignant, and it has been for a long time.

Dramatic representation is not the same thing as sociological statement—or, if it is, then it is to be deplored as bad art. *Macbeth* is not a slander on the Scots, nor is *The Mikado* a statement about Japan. And this principle holds true for *The Sopranos*, which is why so many viewers have instinctively felt that the show is not just a work of art but the best thing ever created for the coarse medium of television. The show is a trope rather than a statement of an ordinary kind, and this is something that most people accept without being aware of it. Add to that the particular reflexive quality of the discourse characteristic of this show, which has a way of preempting criticism. In the world of *The Sopranos*, ethnic stereotyping is explicitly discussed—and dismissed. (The thugs love *The Godfather*, and one of them wants to be a Hollywood screenwriter.)

The show's writing, however, is even shrewder than this suggests. Episodes dealing with ordinary social relations—getting the kid into college, talking to the priest, handling Wall Street investments, talking to the college dean, negotiating with the soccer coach, taking the wife out to dinner, *etc.*—all point up American society itself as a scam and a shakedown, a laid-back *Cosa Nostra*, and make the straightforward thugs seem normative. The postmodern texture of the show's continuity, the weird poetry of the language, and the materialistic fetishism make *The Sopranos* engrossing but difficult to interpret. The uneasy mixture of humor and horror, the mixed effect of outrageous juxtapositions, and the playful music of misapprehensions and mistakes establish patterns that are a challenge to untangle, even if they are compelling to experience.

Some of the books that the series has elicited can be quite helpful. Glen Gabbard's *The Psychology of the Sopranos* is not my cup of tea, but it is a successful and appealing study nonetheless. As an extensively published professor of psychiatry—he is the joint editor-in-chief of the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*—Dr. Gabbard relates to *The Sopranos* in a way that the show, whose central image is Mob-boss Tony Soprano seated opposite Dr. Jennifer Melfi (she of the legs, the short skirt, and the rather affected professional manner), invites. Nothing in the series is better than Tony's shrewd responses to her cues and the intelligence he manages to project from behind his blustering manner. A Freudian analysis throughout, Gabbard's book is a graceful and insightful study that opens up the show, as well as the possibilities of therapeutic engagement. The analysis of Tony's relationship with his monstrous mother, Livia; with his New Age sister; and with his wife and children only show the care with which the show is constructed. Perhaps I am wrong to be surprised to report that Gabbard's is, by far, the best written of these studies of *The Sopranos*.

While Regina Barreca's symposium has the advantage of an Italian-American focus, this does not necessarily yield the best results. These eight essays by Italian-Americans are sometimes imposing (the best is by poet, novelist, and biographer Jay Parini, a professor at Middlebury) and sometimes not (the worst is by Sandra M. Gilbert, madwoman in the attic). Parini's emphasis on satire lends strength to his considerations, but, on the whole, the emphasis on ethnic distinctions is less productive than you might expect.

Maurice Yacowar's *The Sopranos on the Couch* is the most obviously useful treatment of the phenomenon that I have seen, and it is the book on *The Sopranos* to have, if you are having only one. Though a bit slapdash in execution, Yacowar's book is the most detailed and thorough of the five and contains a catalogue of three years of episodes, which are outlined and explicated. The pursuit of significant detail is clever and revealing (as in the analysis of the imagery of fish); the book amounts to a reader's guide to *The Sopranos*, which Yacowar treats as though it were serious fiction or poetry while leading us to the conviction that such a treatment is appropriate—a remarkable conclusion in the case of a television series.

David Lavery's collection is the most obviously academic; even so, it has its uses. For example, *This Thing of Ours* includes a catalogue of intertextual allusions that helps to nail things down that tend to drift in memory. On the whole, however, these 18 essays have sliced the *sopresata* too thin. There are studies devoted to the contexts of television history and the tradition of gangster films, to Canadian and British receptions of the show, and images of body weight and food. Missing from this collection, however, is some of the zest that the show suggests—the sense of gusto that is captured by Gabbard and Yacowar.

The least appealing, and most appalling, book about *The Sopranos* I have seen is David Simon's. His volume uses the show as little more than a platform for a leftist rant about the history and culture of America, so that what we get is not *Tony Soprano's America* but David Simon's—and who needs it? While it is true that crime is a national metaphor in the series, Simon's treatment is a disconnect, because he has no grasp of the tone of things. For pages at a time, as Mr. Simon lectures about Enron and the environment, the show disappears altogether. Where is the laughter, no matter how dark? Where is the fun, not to mention the sorrow and the pity? Anyway, as far as corporate depravity goes, Ralph Nader does it better. Simon's sermonette is oddly skewed: If he valued irony, he would know that reform groups are only another set of con men and shakedown artists, as not only American history but episodes of *The Sopranos* indicate.

Having learned something, I hope, from the best pages in these books, I am not yet completely satisfied that the measure of *The Sopranos* has been taken. Some of the reflections on irony are good, but they do not go far enough, and sometimes they are prematurely sophisticated. The best thing about the show is what you *see*, and though the visual aspect of the series has been felt, it has also been neglected. The very image of the Sopranos' North Jersey "McMansion" provokes a smile or a smirk. The "open" design and the overdone kitchen are exquisite in their banality. The hapless Sopranos are living the American dream, but that dream is a nightmare in terms of domestic furnishings alone. We may add to the visual

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catalogue the personal appearance—the clothes, hairdos, and body language—of the various characters. As embodied by James Gandolfini, Tony Soprano is too much, and you know him even before he opens his mouth. His hulking demeanor is swathed in shirts that would provoke laughter if worn by anyone else. His wife, Carmela, is also a piece of work, with her hair and her sports clothes and her breathless accent. These two represent the unsuccessful move into the upper-middle class, of course. Others regress to type, and perhaps the most superb icon is "Paulie Walnuts," who seems to have disappeared into the image of himself. To know him is to love him: pompadour, tanning treatment, and all. And why should not the actor, Tony Sirico, who plays Paulie Walnuts have disappeared into the image of *himself*? He is well compensated for doing so. Tony Sirico was arrested 28 times and sent to jail twice—for a total of seven years—for armed robbery, and he has a bullet scar on his leg to show that he was once almost a "made man." So much for stereotyping.

More attention has been paid to what you *hear* on the show, and the "offensive language" indeed includes many puns, images, various ironic juxtapositions, bathetic collapses, and malapropisms. Instead of "There's no stigma these days," we have "There's no stigmata these days." (That's easy for you to say, and you can say that again.) Instead of Machiavelli's *The Prince*, we get "Prince Matchabelli" (through *Cliffs Notes*). The beautiful Gloria, Tony says, looks like "one of those paintings by Goyim." Tony insists that he is not "Hannibal Lecture," and his son A.J. is sure that God is dead because "Nitch" said so. This "foregrounding of the utterance" has to be remembered in responding to all the gutter talk, for most of the profanity has a quality of parody, of the apprehension of various levels of culture by the hidebound and the classbound. Again and again, the blue-collar mentality, fortified by wads of cash, crashes as it fails to absorb precisely the references and values of the bourgeoisie into which the swag seemed to have promised entrée. This pattern is an old one in American and British literature. But, as in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and episodes of the Bowery Boys, the irony cuts both ways. The tough-talking thugs are more honest than the *haute bourgeoisie* and more truthful as well, and, finally, the Men of Respect earn something of that, along with some sympathy for the suffering imposed by their limitations. These patterns of language and value remove the pseudoproblem of ethnicity from consideration of *The Sopranos*, for what is benighted about the mobsters is what they have in common with their viewers, not what they don't.

Tony Soprano and his families are a slap in the face not only to the ordinary American sensibility but to the smiley-face pabulum of television itself. Insofar as the show is provocative, we can only affirm against the background of a "vast wasteland": *the worse, the better*. A distorting mirror is required for a distorted society, as the show's designer, David Chase, well knows. If *The Sopranos* is a text rather than a snooze, it is also necessarily a test. c

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September 11, 2001, opened American eyes to a reality the people of the Balkans have known for centuries: militant Islam. As G.K. Chesterton wrote, it was only the "sheer fanaticism" of the Serbs that defended "the frontiers of Christendom against such locust-clouds of foes" while the rest of Europe was "electing our first parliaments and building our first cathedrals."

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The Consent of the Governed Revisited

by Clyde Wilson

A Constitutional History of Secession
by John Remington Graham
Gretna, LA: Pelican Press;
460 pp., $24.95

◆

Americans have lost the habit of constitutional government. Judges hand down commands derived from their own personal revelation, in the teeth of law and majority rule, and are tamely obeyed by millions. A President, recently sworn to uphold the Constitution of the United States, announces his intention to commit the blood and treasure of the citizens in war against a distant state that has provoked his personal ire or the suspicions of his unelected entourage.

To have lost constitutional government is to have lost self-government. Self-government has apparently come to mean no more than counting up punch-card holes to determine which of two interchangeable celebrities will preside over the immense, unreachable, and unlimited machinery on the Potomac that can take our property and even our lives in a fit of pique or even of absent-mindedness. But note: The Founding Fathers spoke not of throwing the rascals out to make way for another bunch of rascals; they spoke of changing the "form of government."

Much of the problem results from the inclination of too many Americans to conflate the state apparatus and the people, to fail to distinguish government from society. Thus, people say "New York City is broke," though the statement does not apply to the place and the people, in all their multifarious life, but only to the passel of politicians who locally monopolize the powers of taxation and legal deadly force. Thus, many Americans seem to regard the President—any president—as a benevolent uncle (the way many Russians viewed Uncle Joe), as a fountain of good will and competence who can do no real wrong and make no serious mistake. After all, we are one big, happy family that plays together.

For the Founding Fathers—or, at least, for the better part of them—the entire point of constitutional government was to provide means for the people to restrain the officeholders. These officeholders were not coterminous with the existing human society but delegates who needed to be kept from overreaching the authority the people had given them. Politicians were, unfortunately, a necessary evil. Like all the rest of us sons and daughters of Adam, they were vessels of vanity, greed, and lust with a perpetual temptation to take advantage of their position. A constitution set limits to help ensure that rulers enhanced society rather than preyed on it.

John Remington Graham has gone back to the origins of our self-government and has found them in the same place the American statesman of independence found them—in England's Glorious Revolution of 1688-89, with a nod further back to Magna Carta. The society of England changed the form of its government by casting off the legitimate Stuart monarch and establishing a new royal house with the consent, and on the terms, of the society. In Graham's words, "the occasion was revolutionary, and it was also lawful, peaceable, bloodless, orderly, necessary, beneficial, and glorious."

On the same principle, the 13 North American colonies changed their form of government by an act of constitution-making by the sovereign people: dissolving their allegiance to the British Crown, creating 13 constitutional republics, and later giving their consent to a mutual agreement in the Constitution of the United States.

Another name for this is *secession*: the withdrawal of consent from the existing form of government. As Graham puts it:

> The right is universal, rooted in natural law and legal tradition—a right of peaceable and lawful revolution. . . . it is a right necessary in extraordinary circumstances for every free and civilized people, whatever their race or culture, wherever their location in the world, whenever they have entered into federal relations with neighboring peoples for mutual advantage. Without it, federal relations are too dangerous to consider. With this right, federal relations can be a great blessing to mankind, and can assure peace and friendship among nations.

Graham brings to the question his considerable knowledge of law and history, a great power of synthesis, and—perhaps most importantly—the experience of his participation in the *amicus curiae* brief for the judicial proceedings in the Canadian high court on the rights of Quebec. The case of Quebec serves as a model of a society claiming and receiving the right to protect its own peculiar qualities from a central power in control of a potentially hostile majority. Would that Americans had as much allegiance to their own Constitution and tradition.

Unfortunately, we seem more intent on constructing a police state manned by bully-boy *federales* who regard criticism of "our President" as treason and who are far more adept at murdering dissident citizens than at protecting us from foreign enemies. Nevertheless, there are signs, as in Graham's work, that some of us are beginning to emulate the Founding Fathers and to think about the legitimacy of forms of government.

Clyde Wilson teaches history at the University of South Carolina.

Tame Monster

by Jeffrey Meyers

Randall Jarrell and His Age
by Stephen Burt
New York: Columbia University Press; 291 pp., $29.50

◆

Randall Jarrell was born in Nashville in 1914 and grew up in Tennessee and Southern California. He studied under poet and critic John Crowe Ransom at Vanderbilt University and followed him to Kenyon College, where he lived in Ransom's attic with the young Robert Lowell and wrote his thesis on A.E. Housman. Encouraged by Allen Tate and Robert Penn Warren, Jarrell was the crown prince of the Southern poets and New Critics. During World War II, he washed out of flight school and became a celestial-navigation instructor at Army Air Force bases in Texas and at Chanute Field, near Champaign-Urbana, in Illinois. He married Mackie Langham in 1940 and (after his divorce) Mary von Shrader in 1952. He was literary editor of the *Nation* in 1946-47 and taught at the Women's

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College of North Carolina in Greensboro from 1947 to 1965. He escaped from this provincial backwater to the Salzburg (Austria) Seminar in the summer of 1948 and to Princeton in 1951-52, and was poetry consultant at the Library of Congress in 1956-57.

Stephen Burt, uncritical when examining his subject's statements, offers a derivative and shallow account of Jarrell's life in his opening chapter. With characteristic self-pity, Jarrell exaggerated the "hellish" hardships of the ordinary schoolboy job of delivering newspapers and learning the useful lesson that adults tell lies. And why did Jarrell find the intelligence, society, and vocabulary of teenage Army recruits to be "all *surprisingly* low"? Burt quotes Jarrell's friend, who called him "faintly monstrous"—probably because of his streak of cruelty—without explaining what he meant, and he tamely notes that Mackie "inspired [his] warm feelings."

Jarrell, who admitted "I am childish in many ways" and longed for someone "to come and make me [a] pet," was domesticated and tamed by his second wife and submerged his identity in hers. Mary encouraged his regressive dependence on her as well as his cloying "little language" of endearments. One of his students recalled that, when Jarrell was invited to the girls' dorm, he and Mary behaved like teenagers going steady: "[T]hey held hands or he stood by her, entwining his arm in the curve of her shawl." In a New York hotel, they acted like "The Bobbsey Twins at the Plaza." After his death, Mary made a mess of editing his *Letters* and then wrote a self-serving account of their traumatic marriage.

By following Mary's party line, Burt curries favor in order to get her permission to quote unpublished material and ignores the facts of Jarrell's suicide. Mary—in California at the time, eager to exculpate herself and keen to collect the insurance money—is no authority. The state trooper who investigated the incident could not explain why Jarrell—having dressed himself entirely in black shortly after slashing his wrist—was walking at night on a major highway. Burt writes that the trooper reported: "'We are going on the assumption that it was suicide.' He said witnesses reported that the victim 'had lunged into the side of the car that struck him.' No charges were placed against the driver." In North Carolina, such an incident has to be ruled an accident if no certain evidence—such as a written note—indicates that suicide was intended. By 1965, Jarrell feared he had lost his poetic powers, was crushed by hostile reviews of his latest book, felt he had not fulfilled his brilliant promise, and had suffered a severe nervous breakdown and manic-depressive psychosis. His close friends—Lowell, John Berryman, and Peter Taylor—all believed he killed himself.

Burt discusses Jarrell's poetry thematically rather than chronologically and tries to explain it in the context of sociological thought. But most of the sociologists he invokes are either obvious ("caring for pets . . . is free of gender-role associations") or opaque ("Equality provides to the self another who is an *each*"); exchanging one jargon for another fails to illuminate Jarrell's poems. Burt's third-hand method is to cite a supposed expert such as Melanie Klein, use Joseph Smith to summarize her thought, and then quote a literary critic—Alan Williamson—to make the putative connection to Jarrell. Burt pointlessly cites Nancy Chodorow's leaden prose to show that an account of psychic life places its actors "in a relational world—both internally object-relational and interpersonally intersubjective." Burt calls Jarrell's novel *Pictures From an Institution* "comic" but somehow misses the hilarity when discussing the novel by quoting Chris Jenks' *Childhood*, portentously following Talcott Parsons: "[T]he social norms . . . diminish the potential distinction between the self and the collectivity by engendering a coinciding set of interests." As Byron, in the dedication of *Don Juan*, said of Coleridge: "I wish he would explain his explanation."

This study—earnest, pedestrian, and dull—began as a misguided dissertation and still reads like one. Burt cites social theorist Eli Zaretsky, tin-eared critic Helen Vendler, and (again) Alan Williamson to support the commonplace claim that "mid-century literature owed much to Freud." Burt frequently mentions Marx's influence on Jarrell but never defines it, is superficial on Rilke's poetry, and never gets beyond Proust's madeleine and lime-leaf tea at the beginning of *Swann's Way*.

This university-press book is filled with errors. Burt does not know foreign languages and cannot correctly transcribe foreign words. He misspells *Pietà*, Bonassola, *Salammbô* (repeating Jarrell's error), de la Tour, *Musée des Beaux Arts*, *le Byron de nos jours*, *Hier bin i' (ich)*, and *wo die Zitronen blühn*. He also misspells C.K. Scott-Moncrieff and Jarrell (with three *l*'s, on page 272) and has particular difficulty with the town in Ohio, variously but incorrectly printed as "Cinncinnati" and "Cincinnatti." Katharine Hepburn has only one leopard in *Bringing Up Baby*. Saint Jerome did not "write" the Vulgate but translated the Hebrew and Greek texts into Latin. Orwell did not die "soon after," but several years after, Jarrell asked him to write reviews for the *Nation*. Burt rightly states that Jarrell's characters often "quote or allude to books they have read" and then misses many important allusions in his work.

When Burt abandons his sociological props and boldly ventures out on his own, his conclusions are weak, disappointing, and sometimes meaningless. He announces that Jarrell "uses ideas and categories that sort individuals by age"; that he views "the family as a refuge from the impersonal, instrumental 'social' world"; that the boy in "Field and Forest" is "described within psychology, most fully, by object-relations models"; and, most strikingly, that "A Girl in the Library" "finally appeals to familiar gendered binarisms." What poetry needs, Burt suggests, is more "gendered binarisms." It is sad to see the brilliant Jarrell subjected to this ham-fisted treatment.

Burt is woefully inadequate on Jarrell's major poems on paintings. He does not seriously consider "The Knight, Death, and the Devil" and "The Old and the New Masters" and does not even mention Dürer when discussing "Jerome," which uses several of Dürer's engravings to suggest a series of parallels between the saint and the psychoanalyst. The deeply moving paintings that inspired these poems become the perfect vehicle for Jarrell's union of Rilke's and Auden's great themes about the modern world: the loss of faith, the indifference to suffering, and the transcendent power of art.

Jarrell had interesting ideas, but he wrote many limp, prosaic, and unmemorable lines. He too often was fanciful and fey, precious and dreamy, whimsical and sentimental. His melancholy frequently merged with self-pity. He indulged in tedious repetition and rhetorical questions: "The flesh wishes itself back, wishes the wish / Unwished" and "Hunters, hunters—but why should I go on?" Jarrell lacked the lyrical sweetness of Ted Roethke, the technical mastery and poignancy of Elizabeth Bishop, the acetylene intensity of Lowell, Berryman, and Sylvia Plath. The unhappy irony of his career is that he

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wanted to be a great poet but now is remembered for his satiric novel and his savage criticism.

Jeffrey Meyers has written about Randall Jarrell in Manic Power: Robert Lowell and His Circle. *He has recently completed a life of Somerset Maugham.*

Myth of Ages

by Paul Gottfried

The Most Reluctant Convert: C.S. Lewis's Journey to Faith
by David C. Downing
Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press; 180 pp., $15.99

David C. Downing's study of C.S. Lewis and his conversion to Christianity in his early 30's offers more than the title might suggest. What we are given is not a repetition of the well-known narrative from *Surprised by Joy*, in which Lewis recounts his journey from youthful atheism to Christian belief 15 years later. Nor does Downing lean conspicuously on the exhaustive biographies of Lewis that have appeared in the last 10 to 15 years (for example, the widely available works of George Sayer, A.N. Wilson, and Walter Hooper). Rather, he approaches his subject's religious life as a kind of intellectual problem, whose Christian end may have been more in doubt before Lewis's "reluctant conversion" than the remainder of his life might lead us to believe.

Although Downing has published a previous work on Lewis, his earlier interest was in the *Ransom Trilogy* and in other literary products of the figure whose "journey to faith" he traces here. For Lewis, as he is understood by Downing, religious and literary truths were inextricably related. Thus, "Christianity would become the fountainhead of all myths and tales of enchantment, the key to all mythologies as the myth that unfolded in history." Moreover, "for Lewis the incarnation became the archetype of a larger pattern, the principle of descent and reascent. In *Miracles* he calls this the 'very formula of reality.'" While Lewis spoke of a specific conversion experience that he underwent in 1931, Downing points to a cumulative process of shifts that, over a 15-year period, resulted in an irreversible turning toward the Faith. Walter Hooper has described Lewis as the "most thoroughly converted man I have ever encountered." Although Downing does not question that conclusion, he nonetheless creates a portrait of Lewis in early manhood that may cause us to marvel at such an outcome.

The most striking aspect of that early life is how much was packed into it. After losing his mother and serving on the Western Front in World War I, Lewis, an Ulster Protestant who went to Oxford on scholarship, distinguished himself as a student and teacher of modern philosophy. At a time when mathematical and positivist trends were dominant in English philosophy and when the neonominalism of G.E. Moore was becoming the rage at Cambridge and Oxford, Lewis was drawing his learning from other sources: the voluntarism of Schopenhauer, the evolutionary vitalism of Henri Bergson, and William James' pragmatic defense of faith. In short, Lewis was an odd bird for an English academic philosopher; not at all surprisingly, he drifted into an intense, prolonged study of literary myth.

During this time, he frequented the magnificent poet—albeit dotty spiritualist—William Butler Yeats (a fellow Irish Protestant) and struck up a friendship with a circle of Oxford scholars who combined Christian convictions with a passion for pagan myth. Lewis's adherence to this group (the Inklings, which included J.R.R. Tolkien, Owen Barfield, and Hugo Dyson) was fateful for his spiritual journey. The members of this circle convinced the conflicted young scholar that Christianity and pagan mythologies were not at variance: "Mythology reveals its own kind of truth and Christianity is true mythology." In fact, "the life, death, and resurrection of Christ embodied central motifs found in all the world's mythologies."

Reading Downing's chapter "Finding Truths in the Old Beliefs," I was struck by how this drawing of comparisons between pagan and Christian stories and images decisively influenced Lewis's return to the Faith of his childhood. Unlike an Old Testament Jew or a biblically based Protestant, Lewis was not apparently concerned about the fit—or lack of one—between the doctrines of a particular Christian church and what the candidate for conversion could accept as divinely revealed truth. Rather, he was looking to see whether Christian redemptive history could be squared with the constant elements of world mythology. His test seems to have been more literary than historical and involved Christianity's compatibility with the ancient narratives of other cultures. I am equally struck by the range, clarity, and number of the books Lewis published or left in his estate (altogether, about 40) that were intended to be defenses of Christian belief.

Downing leaves the reader asking how Lewis's journey to faith could result in such a multitude of brilliant apologetics. To his credit, he avoids p.r. gimmicks in dealing with the biographical aspects of Lewis's life. He does not go into his subject's tragic love life with poetess Joy Davidman, but he does refer briefly and unobtrusively to the successful presentation of this story in the play and movie *Shadowlands*. And he mercifully eschews speculation about Lewis's alleged affairs while a young tutor at Oxford. In this case, *decus* may indeed be *veritas*.

Paul Gottfried is a professor of humanities at Elizabethtown College in Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania, and the author, most recently, of Multiculturalism and the Politics of Guilt *(Princeton).*

The Virtues of Dorothy Parker

by Lawrence Dugan

Complete Poems
by Dorothy Parker
Introduction by Colleen Breese
New York: Penguin Books; 320 pp., $13.95

Literary biography is often an opaque filter for the work of modern writers. The interference comes not so much from the cockeyed analysis we may encounter of an artist's life but from the mass of irrelevant detail. We read the novels and short stories of Ernest Hemingway and J.D. Salinger but also know the events of their lives recorded in newspapers, magazines, books, newsreels, movies, television interviews, memoirs, court documents, and websites. But what does any of that biographical detail have to do with the merits of *A Farewell to Arms* or *Franny and Zooey*?

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Attempting to separate Dorothy Parker, even for a few minutes, from the mystique of her life—the awful details, if you like—is not easy. She came of age as a writer in the first great morning of modern publicity just before and after World War I. She wrote for the first- and second- and third-rate magazines that Franklin P. Adams and P.G. Wodehouse and H.L. Mencken wrote for and joked about in the 1910's. In the 20's, she was a founding member of the Algonquin Roundtable; one of the first writers for the *New Yorker*; a friend of Woollcott, Thurber, Ross, Benchley, *et al.*; and became famous for her smart remarks in conversation, gossip columns, book reviews, and drama notices. She was one of the first generation of Hollywood scenarists and won an Oscar for best screenplay for *A Star Is Born* (1937). You can see her credits on a number of other good movies, such as Hitchcock's *The Saboteur* (1943).

Parker also wrote short stories and poems, some of them very good. And to try to pull any of this work loose from the tangle of her marriages, love affairs, and suicide attempts, and those of her friends and family, is like attempting to read a paragraph by Hemingway or Salinger without seeing a whole life behind it: not impossible but often difficult. So, for the rest of this piece, I shall not say another word about her life but just about her poetry, which is among the best written in the last century in a style that has almost disappeared—classical.

Razors pain you;
Rivers are damp;
Acids stain you;
And drugs cause cramp.
Guns aren't lawful;
Nooses give;
Gas smells awful;
You might as well live.

In an essay on Alexander Pope, Lytton Strachey said that the key to understanding the classical style is found in the quality of compression. It unites, through rhyme and meter and other literary devices, various ideas and objects into an intense, coherent statement. Let us play an Orwellian game and rewrite that poem as a modern paragraph.

Thoughtful analysis leaves us convinced that suicide, as a rational alternative to existence, involves use of materials with secondary effects parallel to and even counter to the desired death so discomforting as to challenge the original desire for self-extinction . . .

We can stop there. The Parker poem concentrates the ghastly choices that might come before a suicide attempt into a nightmarish list of understatements. My prose fabrication almost obscures the topic completely, using many more words without including one concrete noun. Which passage would you give to a person in especially narrow psychological straits? The poem, in memorable classical fashion, reduces the alternatives to their starkest reality—nouns and verbs. The prose passage destroys the meaning of the poem and, most importantly, of the idea behind it. The poem is buoyant, comic, memorable; the prose is lard.

I do not mean to simplify what classical verse attempts, but when we look at the poets whose styles are classical—Chaucer, Marvell, Dryden, Swift, Pope, Goldsmith, Gray, Tom Moore, Byron, and Praed down to Yeats, Frost, Belloc, Roy Campbell, and Parker in the last century—we see that poetic compression of an idea has intensified and clarified it, sharpening whatever edge it has to the finest possible blade of effect, often comic. Shakespeare, Donne, Milton, Keats, Hopkins, Browning, Marianne Moore, and Dylan Thomas do something different. Their language is denser, compacted; their intention, less didactic (even allowing for Milton); their lyricism, more obvious; and they are rarely comic, with the exceptions of Shakespeare, Browning, and Moore. They also concentrate words, but less to sharpen the meaning than to intensify the sound, allowing the meaning to be drawn from that intensity.

As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame

The force that through the green fuse drives the flower

The first line is from Hopkins; the second, Dylan Thomas. They push to the extreme what Shakespeare, Donne, and Keats had started. Dorothy Parker is not of their school. Comedy is an essential element of her style.

To down all kings and presidents
Our Mr. Tench proposes;
His loudly uttered sentiments
Are redder than the roses.
He urges anarchism's cause
In terms concise, but notable;
And what he says about the laws
Would barely pass as quotable.

Sharp as her humor can be, it usually mellows, accepting the parlor-red for what he is. And if a certain type of person, a certain kind of human entanglement, will always be with us, death is at the end of it all. Morley Callaghan (himself a writer of the 1920's) wisely remarked of Hemingway that he kept death in his work in the same way that a medieval scholar kept a skull on his writing table, to remind him of his own mortality. So it is with Parker. She may have been perfectly happy when she wrote "Satin," but its bitterness is convincing, suggesting Sylvia Plath's "Daddy" a generation later. Yet she is never as personal as Plath and always seems somehow to use the formality (for want of a better word) of her style to keep her despair at a comic, or at least an ironic, distance.

Wool's to line a miser's chest
Crape's to calm the old;
Velvet hides an empty breast;
Satin's for the bold.

Lawn is for a bishop's yoke;
Linen's for a nun;
Satin is for wiser folk—
Would the dress were done!

Satin glows in candle-light—
Satin's for the proud!
They will say who watch at night,
"What a fine shroud!"

That poem shows the influence, I think (we never really know), of Emily Dickinson, whom I omitted from my list of classical poets but who probably belongs there. Dickinson, A.E. Housman, and Robert Frost all kept the classical tradition alive and popular well into the 20th century, and, in Frost's case, within living memory. At least one Roman poet, Catullus, also comes to mind whenever you read Parker for more than a few minutes. A nameless absent lover—physically gone but still very much in mind—is often apotheosized in her poems in a tone that exudes a palpable contempt. It is not the lunacy of Plath or Anne Sexton but the disgust that very few poets—Catullus, Pope, and some others—have managed to set down for the ages toward those they once loved or admired, then came to detest. Few have ever bridled their anger as Parker did. Notice the careful combina-

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tion of poetic commonplaces and precise language.

> Somewhere the sunbeams dance
> and play;
> (Where is the love that used to
> thrill?)
> Somewhere the riotous roses sway,
> (Little white love, so still, so
> still.)
> Somewhere the skies of young
> April shine
> Bright as the heavens we prayed
> to then . . .
> Somewhere you're pulling the
> same old line
> Over again.

The first line is conventional, but "Bright as the heavens we prayed to then . . . " is clear and original, preparing us for the last two lines. After awhile, we are not surprised by her harshness, and the game-playing is not annoying. There really *is* a shift in emotion with Parker: She is not simply tricking the reader; she is of two minds. She is amused by her circumstances, and then she is not. Comedy leads to anger, and the poem is completed. There is a great deal of the performer in her art, but that is not something to look down on in a time that has tolerated so much from attitudinizing poets. It is a valid strategy for a writer, and an obvious comic one. Yet comedy has slipped out of our poetic voice as the classical clarity has faded into the past.

Parker published several books of poetry between the world wars, including *Enough Rope* (1926), *Sunset Gun* (1928), *Lament for the Living* (1930), and *Death and Taxes* (1931). (Imagine an academic facilitator at a conference reading off that list of titles!) Colleen Breese's introduction to the *Complete Poems* published by Penguin is a very good comprehensive essay, mixing in much biography. Most important, it is a first-rate edition that pays attention to chronology and the importance of the poems as collections of work, although the primary life of a poem is always by itself, not in an anthology. Many of Parker's appeared in the *New Yorker*, the *New Republic*, the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Vanity Fair*, and *Vogue*, but apparently never in small or literary magazines. She published no poetry after World War II, although she lived until 1967.

These career items are useful in assessing the value of her work. It is of a very high caliber, in some respects, but Parker's technical skill seems to outrun what she has to say. Her use of classical elements for comic effect, including the essential devices of rhyme, meter, and a comic matching of sound and sense, is almost always skillful. She knows how to mix patches of apparent rosy feeling with paradox and reversal. There may be a silver lining, but there may be another, darker one under that; and so on. But the final range of her emotions—you might almost say of her thinking—is not great. She is a defeatist, if a rather heroic one. She is bitter, if able to give her anger a comic turn. The scope of an elegy by Dryden or Gray is beyond her—as it is beyond most poets, to be fair. Even Housman (and I do not mean to take anything away from his greatness as a poet) rises to a grander view of mankind than does Dorothy Parker. Not that she was merely a poet of the beautiful people or of Manhattan sophistication. But beneath it all is a stark simplicity directed at a very small range of life. Had she attempted something larger, she might have been a far greater poet.

There is no way of knowing for sure, and so few people who attempt to write poetry succeed that it is churlish to begrudge her what she achieved, even if you feel that she might have accomplished much more. The entire *New Yorker*/Algonquin school of writers is in need of a monumental critical sorting-out of talent. They left behind an aura of suspicion about their talent and sincerity that has caused much of their work—indeed, much of American literature between the wars—to be neglected. Besides Parker, Franklin P. Adams, Woollcott, Donald Ogden Stewart, Kaufman and Hart, Herman Mankewicz, Wolcott Gibbs, Edna Ferber, Robert Sherwood, Marc Connelly, and many others need critical reexamination. Only Thurber and Edmund Wilson have received their due. This first complete collection of Parker's poetry is proof of that.

They were a contradictory group of writers, of people. They could be supportive and loyal in a pinch, yet frequently, sometimes memorably, bad-mouthed one another. Several started out their careers getting fired from newspapers or magazines for refusing to compromise their standards and then finished them with Hollywood contracts. There is nothing automatically contradictory about that; but with so much wealth and fame thrust upon them, in spite of strong doses of idealism and misery, we wind up back in that muddy biographical trench. The gossipy attention of such books as Brendan Gill's *Here at the New Yorker* and Pauline Kael's *The Citizen Kane Book* (a fascinating work in places) did a great deal 25 years ago to confirm their status as opportunistic, alcoholic lightweights who got lucky. They certainly did little to enhance their stature as writers, which may turn out to be substantial.

Lawrence Dugan's poems have appeared most recently in Chronicles, First Things, Image, *and* Modern Age.

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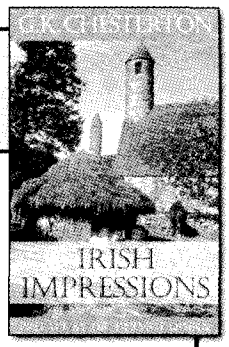

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by Samuel Francis

The Grinch Who Stole Kwanza

The political plum on last year's Christmas pudding, so to speak, was *l'affaire* Lott, which, erupting at the birthday party for retiring Sen. Strom Thurmond in early December and continuing until Trent Lott's less-than-voluntary resignation as Senate majority leader three weeks later, threatened to ruin Kwanza for just about everybody. The Lott crisis was an unhappy one for President Bush and the Republican Party because it forced them to think about their real political base of middle-class whites—not a few of whom are Southerners—rather than twaddle on about the entirely fictitious coalition of blacks and Hispanics mobilized by the GOP's ethnic sensitivity. The President could not simply dump Mr. Lott as unceremoniously as he would have liked, because that would have alienated the millions of white Southerners who saw nothing wrong with the senator's comments. But neither could Mr. Bush keep Mr. Lott as majority leader, because keeping him would have been a plum pudding in the faces of the real custodians of the Republican conscience, namely, the Rev. Jesse Jackson, the Rev. Al Sharpton, and the millions of American blacks whose votes Mr. Bush continues to imagine he can win. The President was thus reduced to the coy stratagem of having his brother Jeb, governor of Florida, and Secretary of State Colin Powell denounce Mr. Lott; by allowing surrogates who had no business saying anything about the senator to say what they did, he slyly communicated to the nation, his party, and Mr. Lott himself that he wanted the majority leader to walk the plank. Once Governor Bush and Secretary Powell had spoken, it was clear that Mr. Lott would have to resign almost immediately, and so he did.

The Mississippi senator's defenestration would have been a largely insignificant event had it not revealed some of the underlying realities of American politics and especially the realities of what currently passes for American conservatism. Mr. Lott had few defenders, and even those who did defend him hastened to do so not on the merits of what he said about Mr. Thurmond's segregationist presidential campaign of 1948 but rather on the assumption that he did not really mean what he seemed to have said. That defense was probably accurate; you do not become Senate majority leader these days by saying what you really believe, and, if Mr. Lott really did disclose the fruits of his meditations on race, segregation, and the course of American history since 1948, it was likely the first and only time in his entire career that he spoke the unvarnished truth about much of anything.

What was significant about the Lott affair was not what he really meant or believes, nor what he and his supporters chose to say, but what his foes said—and not the obvious and predictable ones on the political left. Of course, Mr. Jackson and Mr. Sharpton chose to strut and rant about Mr. Lott's remarks, and, of course, a good many Democrats eager to make what political gains they could from it did so as well. But the foes who really did Trent Lott in and made it impossible for the Republicans to defend him or for President Bush to keep him were the neoconservatives. Had they not immediately denounced Mr. Lott and demanded his resignation, he might well have come through the crisis successfully.

The neoconservative onslaught was immediate and total. Almost to a man, their spokesmen damned Mr. Lott's remarks: "disgraceful" (David Frum); "indefensible" (Jonah Goldberg); "ludicrous" (William Kristol); "appalling" (Charles Krauthammer); "shameful" (a public statement issued by four Republican appointees to the Civil Rights Commission, led by neoconservative race guru Abigail Thernstrom); *etc.* Neoconservative ex-football-star Jack Kemp panted that, "until [Mr. Lott] totally repudiates segregation and every aspect of its evil manifestation," the Republicans would continue to suffer damage from his remarks. According to the *Washington Post*, the quarterback demanded that Mr. Lott "go before a civil rights group and make a major speech about race and racial reconciliation in the New South to help clear the air."

The hostility of the neocon press gang was essential to the collapse of whatever political support Mr. Lott could have garnered for himself. Had there existed a corps of conservative columnists and commentators willing either to defend what he said or to dismiss his remarks as irrelevant and harmless, the majority leader might have been able to retain his position. Facing the nearly unanimous opposition of those who now constitute the permissible "right," however, he had no ground to stand on and no defenders to whom he could point. He could not say to President Bush or his fellow senators, "Stand up for me: My strong support in the media shows we can keep public opinion on our side," because he had no support in the media even from the right (save Pat Buchanan and Robert Novak), and, without such support, he could hardly expect to win or even to keep any allies. Foolishly, having lost the right and whetted the salivary glands of the left, he tried to placate the black left by his ill-advised and disastrous interview on Black Entertainment Television, an act that only hastened his demise.

Mr. Lott's collapse was unfortunate because, for all his personal weaknesses and evasions, he was a reasonably reliable conservative vote in Congress, as his record shows. We could expect nothing radical from Mr. Lott as majority leader, but we could also expect him to do little harm—far less harm, for example, than Newt Gingrich did when, in the 1980's, he led House Republican support for such measures as the Martin Luther King, Jr., holiday, extension of the Voting Rights Act, and sanctions on South Africa, all of which Mr. Lott opposed.

The difference in the voting records of Mr. Lott and Mr. Gingrich, a neoconservative hero, should tell us why the neocons were so eager to purge the Mississippian from the Senate leadership, and, if it does not, their motives soon became clear in their own columns. As Charles Krauthammer wrote, "Neocons have been the most passionate about the Lott affair and the most disturbed by its meaning."

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> Why? Because many neoconservatives are former liberals. They supported civil rights when it meant equality between the races, and they turned against the civil rights establishment when it began insisting that some races should be more equal than others. Neoconservatives were particularly appalled by Lott's endorsement of [the original civil-rights movement's] antithesis, Thurmond segregationism. Not to denounce it—on grounds not of politics but of principle—would be to lose all moral standing on matters of race.

By itself, this is a fair statement of what neocons really want—much fairer than what most of them have said on the subject before, when they have tried to pretend that they were just regular old conservatives after all. The regular old conservatives, of course, as *National Review* and similar conservative organs of the 1950's and 60's consistently made clear, never defended either the "civil-rights movement as originally defined" or its political goals, which, quite aside from racial issues, involved a direct and transparent attack on constitutional principles as well as a concerted subversion of Southern social institutions.

Nevertheless, Mr. Krauthammer's honest statement of neoconservative goals and the whole Lott episode generally served to set off yet another volley from his fellow neocons in another effort to redefine the American right along lines acceptable to, and congruent with, the left and to denounce and expel the paleoconservatives. That was the burden of columns appearing almost simultaneously with that of Mr. Krauthammer by such neocon sages as David Frum and Jonah Goldberg, who once again ranted and raved about the "racism of the past" to which the noble neoconservatives "feel no allegiance" (Goldberg) and the "inescapable racialism and the obsessive antisemitism that one finds among the paleos" (Frum; the "racialist" and "antisemite" that he refers to are Steve Sailer and Charlie Reese, respectively, though you may be certain that Mr. Frum could find others if he cared to).

The neocons exploited the Lott episode to help discredit and expel paleoconservatives even further from the political mainstream. That much would be fine with paleos, who, for the most part, have long since abandoned any desire to share the same movement with the neoconservatives. Less and less does one hear among paleos the call for "taking back" the organs and institutions of the conservative movement; more and more paleos grasp that they and their rivals on the right are two different breeds that share about as much in common as German shepherds and Persian cats, and those paleos see the need to define themselves as an entirely separate movement, with their own organs and institutions. What the neocons were doing, however, went further than yet one more "purge" of the paleos.

By denying any allegiance to the "racism of the past," however, the neocons were renouncing not just the real "racism of the past," which most conservatives of every stripe have long done, but the perfectly legitimate conservatism of the past—the conservatism Senator Lott's voting record represents. The neoconservatives were trying to create a conservatism that openly embraces not just the "civil-rights movements as originally defined" but most of what the "civil-rights movement as currently established" demands—the renunciation of the Confederacy and its symbols and icons; the acceptance of Martin Luther King, Jr., his holiday, and his creed of "radical reconstruction"; the extended Voting Rights Act of 1982; acts of international aggression against such nations as South Africa simply because their racial policies differ from those endorsed by the left and the pseudoright; and, finally, the mass immigration, multiculturalism, and antiwhite hatred of today. Having swallowed virtually every claim of the left that European-American civilization is a "racist" order and that such "racism" is too wicked and irredeemable to be tolerated, the neocons move merrily and logically down the road built by the left to outright rejection of the entire civilization and the people who created it. What else does their insistence that America is an "idea," a "proposition," or a "creed" mean but the abandonment of the historic reality of American culture and tradition in favor of the most abstract and meaningless utopia and the embracing of the antithesis of what remains, even today, a respectable and defensible conservatism?

At least, it *was* respectable and defensible until the neocons invited themselves into the discussion. Their contribution—and this is what lent the Lott episode a significance beyond that of the ordinary cut and thrust of day-to-day politics—was to assist the left in delegitimizing the respectable and defensible conservatism that seeks to protect and defend a particular civilization and people. What neither the Democratic Party, the Reverends Jackson and Sharpton, the *Washington Post*, nor anyone else in the panoply of the left could accomplish, the neoconservatives were able to complete—because they had already established themselves, with the help of the left, as the legitimate voice of the permissible right.

It is likely that the long-term effect of the Lott episode—even more than the Republicans' abandonment of the "Southern strategy" (denounced by Bill Kristol in the wake of the Lott affair) or their pretended adoption of the "Hispanic strategy"—will be to push the party even further to the left on race, immigration, and "civil rights." As the dominant voice of the right, the neoconservatives have shown that they will not hesitate to destroy a senior conservative Republican leader if he deviates from their ideological preferences and premises on such issues and that there can be no media and, therefore, no significant political support for such a leader. The neoconservatives now define what is and what is not respectable and defensible conservatism, and their definition does not include the voting record of Mr. Lott—or of Barry Goldwater, Jesse Helms, Strom Thurmond, and most other conservatives. At the present, there is no significant political force in American politics able to challenge their claim that they are the only legitimate expression of the political right. Maybe it is time somebody started just such an alternative force. C

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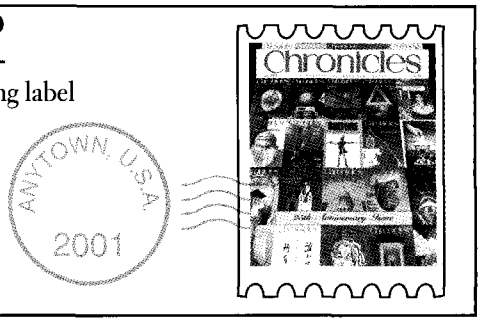

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by Scott P. Richert

Small Is Beautiful

The City of Rockford is broke. That does not mean, of course, that it is insolvent or bankrupt; after all, it is rather hard for any government with the power to tax to end up in that position (though some occasionally do). Like so many other cities of its size today, however, Rockford has projected expenses for the coming fiscal year that far outstrip expected revenues from taxes and other sources—in other words, what any father, looking at his household budget, would define as broke.

The power to tax, however, provides the city with a different set of options from those available to the father. In this current economic slump, the head of a household does not have many ways of increasing its revenue; he may be lucky simply to keep his job. By necessity, he either has to cut expenses (the prudent, though possibly painful, course) or to borrow to make ends meet, pushing those expenses further into the future to a time when, he hopes, he will have a little more cash in his pocket. The city, however, can generate more revenue through a simple majority vote and, thus, avoid the issue entirely. And that, unfortunately, is what Rockford's aldermen have chosen to do.

On Monday, February 3, the council voted to increase the telephone tax by 500 percent (from one percent to six percent), to tack a five-percent tax onto the city's water service, and to increase garbage-collection fees by $24 per year. While the city did delay about $3 million in capital purchases and laid off a total of 29 full- and part-time employees to close its $7.5 million budget gap, the aldermen failed to address the underlying causes of skyrocketing city expenses. Four of the fourteen aldermen voted against the telephone tax; only two voted against the water and garbage fees.

Ald. Frank Beach delivered an impassioned speech, arguing that the city had failed to consider all possible cuts and that the tax increases would only compound the problem by further impoverishing Rockford taxpayers and driving businesses (which have to pay the increased telephone tax on *every* line) out of Rockford, and, a week earlier, Ald. Pat Curran had pointed out that unionized city employees were not being asked to give up anything—even a portion of their raises—to help balance the budget. (Rockford taxpayers fund the healthcare of each city employee to the tune of $12,000 per year—a plan that far outstrips those of most private-sector workers.) Most of the "debate," however, sounded like the Bush administration's rhetoric over its Iraq policy, with alderman after alderman declaring that the "easy thing to do" would be to vote against the tax increases and congratulating himself for his "courage" in raising taxes in order to maintain the current level of city services.

There were some interesting moments, however, that the local media failed to notice. Ald. David Johnson, a Republican, announced that he would be voting for the tax increases because, he argued, he had no choice: The cost of city services cannot be significantly trimmed because the growth in those costs has been driven largely by the expansion of Rockford through annexation. Over the last ten years, during which Rockford's population rose by 7.7 percent (or 10,689 residents), the size of the city has increased from approximately 45 square miles to approximately 60, an increase of 33 percent.

The problem, as Alderman Johnson later acknowledged in an interview, is that the cost of fire and police protection, of snow removal and street repair, and even of water, sewer, and garbage collection, may be driven more by geography than by population growth. Rockford police today need to cover one third again as many miles as they did in 1990, and firemen need to be prepared to respond to emergencies in areas farther removed from existing stations. Much of the cost of garbage collection is road time, and the cost of providing and maintaining water and sewer lines depends less on the number of houses connected than on the length of the mains and the sewers.

Because deannexation is not really an option, there is no easy answer to the current budget shortfall, but there is an obvious step that the council could take to keep from making it worse: Quit annexing unincorporated areas of Winnebago County. Responding to a multitude of studies over the past two decades that show that, in the long run, the costs of annexation usually outweigh the additional tax revenues, cities across the United States have taken a more cautious approach to annexation, often requiring developers (who typically make the annexation requests) to pay for a cost-benefit analysis before they will consider an annexation proposal.

Here in Rockford, however, at the same meeting where the tax hikes were approved, the council voted 14-0 to approve one annexation proposal and 13-1 to approve another. (Bob Greene, the Democratic alderman from Ward 1, the fastest-growing ward in the city, voted against annexing property that would be added to his ward.) In light of those votes, it is hard to believe that the council is taking the budget crisis seriously.

With the highest crime rate in the entire state (higher even than Chicago's!) and property taxes that are still, even after the end of the school-desegregation lawsuit, some of the highest in the country, Rockford needs to get its priorities straight. Yes, refusing to annex more property will undoubtedly slow down development, but, since the American Farmland Trust consistently ranks Northern Illinois as one of the most endangered farming areas in the country, that may not be such a bad thing. And with Rockford now occupying about 12 percent of the geographic area of Winnebago County, developing new population centers—and new centers of political power—may benefit the county as a whole.

Just a little over a week after the council meeting, the local Gannett paper reported that Aurora may have surpassed Rockford as the second-largest city in Illinois. I think we should let the title go. What Rockford needs now is a healthy contingent of Little Rockfordians. c

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Letter From the Russian Federation

by Wayne Allensworth

A Place Called Home

◆

Kazan was preparing for her 1,000-year anniversary last August when Russian President Vladimir Putin arrived to address the World Tatar Congress in what once had been the center of a Tatar khanate. The goal of the congress was the "spiritual unification" of the Tatars, scattered across Russia and the world. I do not know whether President Putin paused to reflect on the lengthy and bloody history that has bound the Tatars and the Russians to this same land, though his somewhat tense reception at the congress, and the questions it raised about Russian citizenship and the old problems of ruling a multinational state, probably reminded him that all the tactful utterances he could make would not change history or alter the fundamental loyalties of the Tatars.

The Tatars—a Turkic, Muslim people of the vast Russian steppe—succeeded the dreaded Mongols as the scourge of old Rus. Their repeated invasions of Moscow's realm inflicted heavy losses on what had become the center of medieval Russia. By the middle of the 16th century, the various Tatar khans in Kazan, Astrakhan, and the Crimea began coordinating raids that won them booty and slaves, wreaking havoc and terror on the Slavs. Thus, in 1551, Czar Ivan IV (Ivan the Terrible), launched a sustained offensive against the Tatar khanates. After attacking the Crimean Tatars and the forces of their ally, the Turkish sultan, Ivan advanced on Kazan. After a six-week siege, his forces used gunpowder to blast through the city's fortifications, storming and conquering it in a swift, bloody battle. Princes Mikhail Vorotynsky and Andrey Kurbsky led the first detatchments into the city, winning the bitter battle and themselves a place in Russian history.

Ivan the Terrible would win his own place in history, chiefly for his brutality, his war on the Russian nobles, and the expansion of both the territory and the administrative mechanisms of the state. Some would later claim that the Georgian bandit Joseph Stalin fancied himself Ivan's true successor, even as he prudently invoked the symbols and history of old Russia to mobilize the masses in the "Great Patriotic War" (World War II) and to justify his own rule. To this day, the Man of Steel is remembered by some nationalists as the "red czar" and a great Russian patriot.

Ivan had answered the national question the only way he knew how: "If one people must dominate, then it must be mine." Stalin followed suit, answering Lenin's political query "*Kto Kovo?*" (roughly, "Who will dominate whom?") in an unforgettable way. Many Russians still cannot understand the difference.

The thorny problems of history, national identity, and the question of common citizenship for Tatars and Russians would not go away during Putin's trip to the provinces. Those who did remember their history must have smiled when, during an informal meeting with journalists, Putin noted, without a trace of irony, that Kazan had once been a center of trade for Russians, Scandinavians, Arabs, and Tatars and that the city, now rediscovering its Islamic and Turkic identity, "must serve as an example of religious and inter-ethnic peace, well-being and accord." It was easy for him to say, since, in this instance, the Russians had been the victors.

In spite of Putin's shallow sermonizing on peace and accord, the friction between Kazan and Moscow had begun even before his arrival and did not let up during his visit. Tatar President Mintimer Shaymiyev had told the congress that he would fight what he called Moscow's attempts at recreating a unitary state—that he, as leader of the Tatar people in Russia and around the world, would fight any attempts to diminish Tatarstan's hard-won sovereignty, including the republic's right to a separate Tatar citizenship and to be recognized as an autonomous entity within—or, as an earlier version of the Tatar constitution put it, "associated with"—the Russian Federation. The preservation of the Tatar republic, its peculiar statehood, and the controversial provisions of its constitution, Shaymiyev intoned, provided the Tatar nation with the "structures necessary for developing our language and culture." The Tatars were, after all, Russia's second-largest nationality, with about five million people—and the Tatar president complained loudly for the benefit of local media that Moscow's census-takers were planning to divide the Tatars into various subgroups, artificially diminishing both their numbers and their political clout.

Shaymiyev also mentioned the threat globalization presented to national identity, stating that "we cannot allow the Tatar nation to be dissolved in a globalist flood." (Moscow was attempting to join the World Trade Organization.) He further appealed to the other non-Russian peoples of the federation—particularly his "brother Bashkirs"—to join the good fight against the encroachments of the "center" and to enhance the national republics' status. The Tatar leader, who has near-dictatorial powers, prudently did not mention the flow of money from Islamic organizations within Tatarstan to Chechen insurgents, something that has irritated Moscow for years and has stimulated the "center's" efforts to rein in the overly independent Tatars.

The delegates at the congress were every bit as aggressive as Shaymiyev in stating their complaints: Some raised the census issue; others, the question of quotas for representatives of non-Russian nations in the state apparatus; and another broached the delicate question of whether Muslim women could wear their headscarves for ID photos.

Putin was tactful but did not back away from any of Moscow's stated intentions concerning non-Russian republics: He insisted that Tatarstan modify the offensive sovereignty and citizenship clauses in her constitution and even politely insisted that Russian ID documents would be difficult to use if faces were obscured by headscarves. He conceded that Moscow should support the efforts of Tatars to institute the study of their native language, but he stated that he would resist efforts to impose any quota system on state appointments. Putin, however, became noticeably irritated by one delegate's contention that it was difficult to be a Tatar—to be conscious and protective of his identity and to raise his children as Tatars—outside the national republic. Putin sharply replied, "So, it's not easy to be a Tatar in Bashkor-

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tostan. What about a Russian in Tatarstan? . . . A Mordovian in other parts of Russia? How do these people feel? . . . Ours is a multinational state . . . and we must understand . . . that if a representative of any ethnic group . . . does not feel at home in our country, we will not preserve our . . . statehood."

Shaymiyev was not happy and refused to hold a personal meeting with Putin, who left the ancient Tatar capital for the more friendly—and more Russian—environs of Vladivostok.

Samuel Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations* has become a reality, both in America, as demonstrated on September 11, 2001, and in Russia, as shown in the ongoing conflict between Moscow and Islamic militants in the non-Russian republics, especially in Chechnya.

The developing nation-state, dubbed the "integrated state" by Walker Connor, combined expansive administrative bureaucracy with industrial development. New commercial relationships displaced feudal and communal ties, demanding both the destruction of the old order and the creation of new social bonds. Industrialism also demanded a more mobile population. The centralized bureaucratic state served both purposes well, promoting the interests of the new economic classes, while centralized educational systems standardized language and homogenized regional cultures, making Germans out of Bavarians and Prussians, and Frenchmen out of Normans and Gascons.

But the problem of incorporating identity groups that were too racially, religiously, or linguistically distinct became an irritant to the evolving nation-state, which demanded a single administrative, cultural, linguistic, and economic space in order to function efficiently. Thus, as Professor Connor asserted in *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding* (1995), the "Age of Nationalism" is both a sign of the modern state's development and a reaction to it, in the demands for popular sovereignty and homeland states by minority groups faced with cultural, if not physical, extermination.

I will not attempt to downplay the degree of violence and coercion used to hold the pre-1917 Russian Empire together. The present Chechen war is merely an extension of earlier wars between the empire and the mountain peoples of the Caucasus, who are now mobilized by resurgent Islam. Nevertheless, the traditional Russian assertion that many of the empire's subject nations were given a considerable degree of autonomy and, in some cases, actually preferred the czar's rule to that of the Turkish sultan or even the Swedes does contain some truth.

By the 19th century, the Russian Empire was a patchwork of grand duchys and national autonomies. The Finns, for example, participated actively in the life of the empire, while retaining a high degree of autonomy at home. As a reaction to the rising tide of nationalism and as part of various czars' modernization attempts, Russification was increasingly used both to absorb troublesome nationalities, such as the Poles, and to advance the administrative reach of the state. In 1899, an order decreeing that Finland, which had been quite loyal to Moscow, must conform to the general administrative system of the state was accompanied by intense Russification programs. As historian Nikolas Riasanovsky wrote, Finland "almost overnight" became bitterly hostile to Russia and a hotbed of revolutionary activity.

In the pre-revolutionary empire, a non-Russian subject could become Russian by adopting the Russian language, claiming Russian culture as his own, and converting to Orthodoxy. Citizenship, in today's sense, did not exist. A subject could remain within the national autonomy or do service for the imperial regime without losing his primary identity and could still see his birthplace—or *rodina* as the Russians call it—as his homeland or Motherland (*rod* implies kinship). The non-Russian could adopt Rus as his Fatherland (*otechestvo*). But as modernization was clumsily instituted under the czars, then pursued relentlessly by the Soviets, the thorny problems of identity and primary loyalty within the multinational state were aggravated.

The Soviet regime claimed to have built a union of republics that were national in form and socialist in content, a union in which no one nationality dominated the central state (and, thus, the other nationalities) and national cultures were allowed to flourish. Of course, the Soviet regime suppressed national cultures, hunting down "bourgeois nationalists" wherever it could find or imagine them. At the same time, the Russification programs pursued throughout the Soviet Union were necessarily shorn of Orthodox Christianity, which had been an integral part of the Russian identity under the old regime.

As the Soviet Union declined, it became apparent that Soviet-style Russification had drastically altered the Russian identity: The combination of forced industrialization, urbanization (the village community was the cultural and economic foundation of the old Russia), state atheism, and the rewriting of pre-revolutionary history to conform to Marxist-Leninist doctrine, together with the drive to create an artificial civic identity based on a watered-down version of the dominant culture, had Sovietized the Russians as well as Russified some members of their subject nationalities.

To some extent, treaties made with national republics in postcommunist Russia were Moscow's attempt to hold together the Russian Federation as the Soviet Union collapsed. Thus, the new relations between Moscow and the regions were vaguely like the old arrangements with national autonomies under the czars. "Take as much sovereignty as you want," Boris Yeltsin told the national republics, which resulted in a flourishing of republic citizenship clauses as well as a renewed interest in long-suppressed minority cultures.

The word *rossiyskiy*, a term with civic and political overtones, had come to designate a citizen of the Russian Federation. (*Russkiy*, on the other hand, designates an ethnic Russian and all things specifically related to ethnic Russians.) So, while a citizen of the Russian Federation, a *rossiyanin*, may be an ethnic Russian, a Tatar, or a Bashkir, the term *russkiy* is viewed with great suspicion by minority ethnic groups, particularly when it is used by the country's political or economic elites. On the other hand, many Russian nationalists despise the term *rossiyskiy*, seeing its use by state officials as a threat to the nation's true identity and as an obstacle to both the revival of Russian national culture and the protection of ethnic Russians' rights in national republics.

Was Yeltsin right to grant wide autonomy to the national republics? I believe that a sharp division of powers between the "center," the regions, and local municipalities should be part of any solution to modern Russia's dilemma of balancing the interests of her various ethnic groups. But the fact remains that, under modern conditions, members of various ethnic groups are competing for jobs as part of a highly mobile workforce within the single economic space of the integrated state, while the media continues to threaten ethnic identities with cultural homogenization. National education sys-

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tems have a similar effect. And urbanization forces these diverse groups into population centers, where they strive to dominate the workplace, media, and schools, which often results in the institution of quotas. More contact among ethnic groups does not necessarily increase their prospects for getting along. Modernity has not solved the old problems of keeping the peace in a multinational state; in many cases, it has only made them worse.

What can the Russian experience teach us? First, that we can only begin to deal with the reality of identity politics in multinational states by, as the Russians say, calling things by their right names. The Russian distinction between citizenship and nationality recognizes the reality of primary loyalties, cemented by the natural bonds of kinship, shared culture, and common experience. Only when we recognize that a Tatar is different from a Russian and that his loyalties will most likely remain centered on his own kind can we begin to recognize what civic membership—citizenship—can and cannot do. Thus, Russia recently tightened her requirements for acquiring citizenship and began making it difficult for aliens, especially those who are not proficient in the Russian language, to obtain residence cards. At the same time, Moscow is attempting to tighten control over Russia's borders and to work out a new relationship with the national republics.

The Russian experience teaches us that there are limits on the modern state's ability to assimilate ethnic groups: We may be able to create a common cultural space in which Cajuns and Swedes can become Americans, share in a common sense of civic identity, and yet retain many of their cultural distinctions. Absorbing millions of Third World immigrants, however, will strain the capacity of that space to accommodate mass populations who come from vastly different civilizations.

In the Old America, there were citizens who spoke German in Central Texas and Cajun in Southern Louisiana; Catholics who prospered within the common space of American Protestant culture; and patriotic Southern Americans who taught their own version of the War Between the States in local schools. If we are ever to recreate that place, for ourselves and our children, then curtailing Third World immigration is a necessary—but not sufficient—first step. For Middle Americans are being Sovietized in much the same way that the Russians were: A distorted, deracinated Americanization—of Wal-Mart and McDonald's, of suburb-speak and microwaved meals, of de-Christianized "civic religion," and "national greatness conservatism"—is crippling our ability to fight the immigration battle, let alone recover our ethnic identities and reconstitute real communities. We cannot even understand the nature of such battles if our own sense of nationality has been distorted by Sovietization, which serves the ruling elite's political agenda of preserving its own power while destroying an authentic American identity. They, like Stalin, are most interested in Lenin's political question.

Wayne Allensworth is the author of The Russian Question.

Letter From London

by Andrei Navrozov

The Hole in the Heart

◆

Morphine puts you to sleep, explains a pompous savant in Moliere, because it is a soporific. By this tautology is the great dead void at the core of Western civilization exposed, finally and, I dare say, mercilessly. What vitality, what resistivity, what transcendent stubbornness our spiritual truth once possessed ("Even if it were proven me that there is truth without Christ," wrote Dostoevsky, "I would still take Christ over truth"), they have been all but smothered by that kind of artless and airless scholasticism.

Catch adults in the act of explaining things to children. What an avalanche of arrogant verbosity do we see crashing about those innocent little heads! How shamelessly is the word *because* abused, whether the subject of instruction is volcanoes, onions, or angels! And note, incidentally, the ingenuous way the old have devised to educate the young in the sacred principles of causality: "Don't," they are ever warning them, "because . . ." Don't play with fire because you'll hurt yourself. Don't touch the vase because it'll fall and break. Don't go into the forest because it's easy to get lost there. And, when the child rummages in the hearth without getting burned, when the Chinese vase stands as before, or when a warm handful of wild strawberries is held up to the skeptical snout, they just shrug. The statistics, they think, are on the side of the house.

Whenever *he* gets it wrong, the gambler has to pay. Not so with our culture, which seems to think it can be wrong as often as it likes, without ever having to pay a forfeit. Didn't you crucify your God? Lose Rome to the barbarians? Kill off half the adult population of Europe in a matter of decades? Ah, yes, well, but it all worked out in the end, because we aren't just individuals, you know. We're not some bunch of crazy gamblers. We are the institution, the corporation, the casino. We can lose without ever feeling the pain. There's always plenty of other suckers out there.

The Aristotelian *organum*, which has increasingly dominated our culture since the Renaissance and found its ultimate expression in the binary code of the computer, has had the effect of reducing Western thought to a game called "20 Rational Questions." Information, fragmented into bits fixed with A-or-not-A certitude, is used to describe the world with the pixel-pat cynicism of a television image. Yet the picture on the screen is but an artless, airless lie, a tendentious fiction, a mendacious tautology of cause and effect that leaves the substance of life almost totally unexplained. For can't a woman be ugly and alluring at the same time? Can't a tall, handsome grenadier behave as a vile coward, despite his manly moustache? Can't a saintly hermit plausibly seduce and then strangle a 12-year-old? Can't a dissident rabbi turn water into wine? Can't a rosy-cheeked Sicilian soprano, without a care in the world to speak of, embody human suffering in Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater*? Can't a person win *big* at roulette?

The practical applications of science—whence the philistine's concept of miracle is derived, just as his concept of pleasure, generally speaking, is derived from pornography—now have the world to themselves and are the gospels of the religion of rationalism. Which is not to say that the other, forgotten, losing religion, though based on the irrational premise of the transcendent miracle of life, was ever illogical. For instance, while it would be right to say that Abraham was given the Promised Land *because* he had come to believe in the promise, it would not be right to say that the Flood came *because* Noah had started building the Ark.

Apart from being undoubtedly evil—undoubtedly, at least, for those who know

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whither the road paved with good intentions—Enlightenment ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity are, above all, rational ideals. Hope, faith, and charity are not. In fact, I would venture to argue that *nothing* in Christianity, beyond what is already contained in the salutary commandments of the Old Testament, is rational in this sense. How did it come to pass, then, that our professedly Christian, Western culture lost its intuitive moorings to become what it now is, a monstrous double of the pompous know-it-all in Moliere, an adding machine ever crunching meaningless numbers, a travesty-voiced robot spouting syllogistic banalities until the battery runs out and the eternal night of totalitarianism descends?

I'm not saying that we must all turn to Eastern mysticism, or try walking on water after a heavy lunch, or even be portrayed by Francis Bacon in attitudes expressive of inner torment. But come on, live a little! Let the careless child burn his fingers playing with matches. Let the faithful adoring wife go on worshiping her husband, the idler in a spotted cravat who is secretly taking all her jewelry to the pawnbrokers. Let the clueless dreamer have a go at saving the fallen woman, who is using his driver's license to rent the getaway car for a bank heist. Let the frustrated poet take the stretch limousine to the Pieria of green baize, where he may or may not lose his shirt of cambric linen.

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, judge for yourselves. If our civilization has so botched the job of saving itself collectively, if our culture has proved itself so unfit to defend itself rationally, who is to say that the individual child, woman, or man will not be luckier beyond the confines of reason? For life, in the only form in which it is worth living, is as spontaneous, unpredictable, and complex as the components of the sacred flame in which Christianity incinerated its heretics, in contrast to the chemically pure Zyklon gas later used by the rational West to affirm its total power over the divine play of chance and the unknowable that is the human spirit.

The Russian emigré biographer of Dostoevsky, Mark Slonim, had this to say of the writer's "gambling madness":

> Roulette fascinated him as a door to the irrational, as a way of communing with the accidental; fortune and misfortune at the wheel did not obey the laws of reason and were akin to those unknowable primordial beginnings of the universe when there existed neither morality nor the limits of Euclidean space. It also gave him the chance to correct the injustices of birth, of position, of poverty, and of circumstances by a single spectacular stroke of luck, a singular challenge to fate. And was not the whole process of gambling a challenge to the oppressive inevitable, an escape into the delicious lawlessness of free action and untrammeled chance?

"Lucky at the tables," they say, "unlucky in love," and there is great wisdom in this observation, essentially a paraphrase of Matthew 6:21: "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Like roulette, love is the thirst for manifest miracle, yet of the old-fashioned, gospel kind; no flat-screen TVs and vaccines for AIDS, please. Logically (and, as I said, we gamblers have our own logic even as the prophets have theirs), it happened that no sooner did the 46-year-old Dostoevsky marry his stenographer—*because* he needed her collaboration to meet publishers' deadlines for both *The Gambler* and *Crime and Punishment* simultaneously, *because* he needed the cash for gambling, *because* she was then only 20—than he fell in love with her, desperately, tenderly, and absolutely.

But once chance starts smiling, laughing, giving, there is soon no room on the table or in the pockets, as the skies open and the miracles come like a rainstorm in midsummer, absurdly generous, profligate even, reviving the parched, cracked earth and turning the hot stone of the air to fragrant wine of the Bekaa:

> I quietly whisper: *I thank thee,*
> *Thou givest far more than is asked.*

They lived happily ever after—at least for 14 years, those of *The Possessed* and *The Idiot*—until the writer's death in 1881. Anna Snitkina became, according to Slonim, the last great love of Dostoevsky's life and the only lucky one. Soon after their first child was born, he played roulette, at Wiesbaden, for the last time. "After his death," Slonim writes,

> Anna Grigoryevna [Dostoevskaya] remained faithful to her husband. In the year he died she was just 35, but believed her life as a woman completed and dedicated herself to serving his name. She produced his complete works, in 1906 compiled a 5000-item bibliography of his writings, organized the Moscow Historical Museum department of manuscripts, memoirs, and portraits, founded the Dostoevsky School at Staraya Russa, collected his notes and letters, encouraged his friends to write his biography, and published her own recollections.

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, what is your rational verdict? Is this winning *big* at roulette, or what?

Andrei Navrozov is Chronicles' *European correspondent.*

Letter From Belgrade

by Srdja Trifkovic

Privatization in Serbia

◆

In articles dealing with the 2002 presidential election in Serbia, I have made passing references to Zoran Djindjic as "Serbia's kleptocratic prime minister" and to his "corrupt establishment" that "controls the economy and the media more stringently than Milosevic had ever done." While such designations would be considered unremarkable by most of Serbia's impoverished and disheartened people, they raised an eyebrow or two among some foreign Yugoslavia-watchers who still believe that Mr. Djindjic is a "pro-Western, reformist" politician whose program of privatization may prove painful at first but will eventually lead Serbia to prosperity and a free-market system.

That is wishful thinking. Mr. Djindjic, his privatization minister Aleksandar Vlahovic, and about a dozen members of their inner coterie are in the process of turning Serbia's state industries into their own private assets by means that would be considered criminal in most Western countries. Take the announcement by Mr. Vlahovic last October that the Zastava car factory in Kragujevac would be sold to an American buyer. According to Reuters,

> Zastava became well-known as pro-

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ducer of the cheap-and-cheerful Yugo hatchback in the 1980s but was crippled by international sanctions and bombed by NATO during the turmoil that engulfed the Balkans in the 1990s. Vlahovic said the joint venture with New Jersey based NUCARCO, backed by a group of investors headed by New York investment bank Kaupthing Securities Inc, would raise monthly production from 1,200 vehicles now to 10,000 over three years. NUCARCO Inc. is headed by Malcolm Bricklin, who brought the Yugo to the U.S. market in the 1980s. Vlahovic said the joint venture would be called Zastava Motor Works ZMW. NUCARCO would own 80 percent, undertaking to invest a minimum of $150 million over three years to upgrade technological standards and existing brands and to initiate development of new models.

The questions connected with this story are not immediately apparent to most; for those of us who instinctively reach for our wallets when the name of Mr. Vlahovic is mentioned, however, they come naturally.

According to the Department of Revenue in Trenton, no company by the name of "NUCARCO" is registered in New Jersey. In a telephone interview, Mr. Malcolm Bricklin tried to assure me that the company does exist, as the umbrella group for Zastava Motor Works USA, but there is no proof so far.

Moreover, Mr. Bricklin—for all of his upbeat talk of "returning job security and a sense of pride to Serbian workers"—refused to disclose any details about the company's ownership and management structure, personnel, or present capitalization.

The same air of mystery applies to Zastava Motor Works USA, which, at one time, had a shell of a website (*www.myzmw.com/zmw.html*) displaying silhouettes and pictures of Zastava cars with no accompanying text or functioning links. (The website has since disappeared.) Mr. Bricklin says that the company does have a mission statement and a business plan, but he refused to disclose any information. He told me that all further inquiries should be addressed to the Serbian government, as he is not at liberty to discuss such issues without approval from Belgrade.

Kaupthing Securities Inc. turns out to be a securities-trading subsidiary of Kaupthing, an Icelandic bank, which, in addition to its corporate headquarters in Reykjavik, also has offices in Copenhagen, the Faroe Islands, Helsinki, Luxembourg, and Switzerland. According to the bank's statement for the first half of 2002, "The operations of overseas associate companies and subsidiaries returned a profit of less than ISK 1 million" (less than $15,000 at current exchange rates).

The firm's website (*kaupthing.com*) and its newsletter make no mention of Kaupthing's participation in any deal concerning Zastava, NUCARCO, or Serbia. In a telephone interview, a representative for Kaupthing told me that the company will be retained by NUCARCO, but neither he nor Mr. Bricklin wanted to disclose how they intended to raise substantial liquidity, except to indicate that there would be no IPO for at least three years and that foreign providers of financial assistance to Serbia are expected to chip in.

Mr. Bricklin's name raises many eyebrows in the automotive industry. A column in the *Detroit News*, "Bricklin redux: Another one of Malcolm's bright ideas" (May 1, 2002) illustrates his reputation:

> Omigosh, Malcolm Bricklin is at it again . . . He's hooked up with his old pals at Serbian automaker Zastava, the former manufacturer of the late and largely unlamented Yugo, to bring another low-priced automobile from the region to lucky North American consumers. . . . I can't help but wonder if he'd have better luck in trying to rebuild the Serbian film industry.

First, some history. When Bricklin dropped out of university in 1958, he established a building-supplies business in Orlando and franchised Handyman Hardware, which reached a peak of 18 stores. Then the lawsuits started; by the time he was 25, his name was on half a dozen of them. In 1971, however, he made a fresh start and formed two car companies, General Vehicle Inc. and Bricklin Vehicle Corporation. By late 1972, he had a prototype for an inexpensive sports car, with gull-wing doors—like the later DeLorean's—and started looking for investors to finance it and a plant to manufacture it. After failed negotiations with the government of Quebec, he went to New Brunswick, where he garnered $20 million in Canadian taxpayer funds. As Bricklin's biographer, Charlie Russell, recalls:

> The New Brunswick government had provided financing of $4.5 million for Bricklin's car. The money had been advanced on the assumption that Bricklin needed the initial financing to begin the production of cars. By the time the New Brunswick government discovered its error, it would have paid for the engineering and development of Bricklin's car. By that time, it would also be paying many of the costs, including salaries, of keeping Bricklin's U.S. companies in operation.

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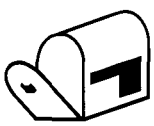

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Over the next three years, only 2,854 Bricklins were produced, but when Bricklin Canada Ltd. and General Vehicles Ltd. filed for bankruptcy, the companies owed a total of $34.6 million, which makes Bricklins second only to DeLoreans in cost per unit. In 1976, Mr. Bricklin filed for bankruptcy with a U.S. district court in Phoenix, declaring personal assets of $2,000 against debts of over $32 million.

In the aftermath of the Canadian fiasco, it was argued that "Malcolm Bricklin's flagrant nepotism alone would have been reason enough for a prudent business operator to call a halt": His mother had been paid $30,000 per year as vice president; his father, $60,000 a year as head of "cost reduction." He took care of his family, while New Brunswick's premier took care of him—and nobody took care of the interests of the taxpayers.

The subsequent Yugo episode is remembered chiefly for cruel jokes. ("How do you double the value of a Yugo? Fill up the gas tank.") Mr. Bricklin blamed the fiasco on poor quality and Yugoslavia's implosion, but the company went belly-up before the first shots were fired in the Balkans. Then, in 1993, the indefatigable Malcolm Bricklin and two other entrepreneurs formed the Electric Bicycle Company and developed a battery-powered moped called the EV Warrior. That company went bankrupt in 1997, just as interest in electric mopeds seemed about to take off.

Malcolm Bricklin then undertook yet another high-risk automotive venture—this time, manufacturing fuel cells. In 1998, Bricklin's EVX Inc. signed an agreement with British fuel-cell maker Zevco to open a pilot plant in New York City to replace internal combustion engines with Zevco fuel-cell engines.

Mr. Bricklin's record would be enough to warrant a painstaking and very open investigation of the proposed Zastava deal. Any prudent investor would want to see some tangible evidence that Bricklin had learned from his many mistakes before plunging into a deal that is not at least evenly matched by Bricklin's personal funds. Considering the track record of Djindjic, Vlahovic, *et al.*, this deal could spell big trouble for Zastava's long-suffering workers, for Serbia's impoverished citizens whose taxes built the factory in the first place, and for any entity rash enough to provide the start-up capital.

My article disclosing all of the above was published in the Belgrade daily *Glas javnosti* on October 18, 2002, and it caused an immediate sensation. The following day, a Saturday, the Zastava Works' Independent Union Council held an emergency session and demanded a meeting with Minister Vlahovic. Kostunica's Democratic Party of Serbia called for an immediate moratorium on the proposed sale and an investigation. The following Monday, Vlahovic retracted his earlier announcement and explained that the proposed deal had not gone beyond the letter of intent and that his government would gladly consider other partners if they could be found. His ministry further announced that the proposed deal would be subject to Bricklin's ability to produce ready cash.

The shady privatizers' lives may have been made a little more difficult by the controversy, but they will not give up: A lot of money is at stake. According to a local source, "Whoever is trying to 'privatize' Zastava using Bricklin as a front—and several prominent names from Serbia's new political and business elite are mentioned, including the veteran wheeling-dealing businessman from the old communist era Milorad Savicevic—he is bound to try again." This was evidenced by Bricklin's hastily organized visit to Serbia in November, during which he acted and spoke as if the deal had been signed and sealed.

For the conclusion of this particular saga, you will have to look elsewhere. Having been warned to "stop poking my nose into matters that are none of my business," I will go back to foreign affairs. In Belgrade, there have been over 50 unsolved murders in the past five years. Even writing about Islam is safer.

Srdja Trifkovic is the foreign-affairs editor of Chronicles *and the author, most recently, of* The Sword of the Prophet: Islam—History, Theology, Impact on the World.

Letter From Abroad

by Jeffrey Meyers

Unseen Places

◆

In Huysmans' *Against the Grain* (1884), the precious hero Des Esseintes has "the idea of turning dream into reality, of traveling [from France] to England in the flesh as well as in the spirit, of checking the accuracy of his visions." He orders a servant to pack his bags, calls a cab, and stops in a bookshop to glance at Baedeker's description of modern paintings in London. On the way to the Gare Saint-Lazare, he has a glass of sherry in the Bodega, swarming with beefy English characters right out of Dickens. Contemplating the train ride to the coast and the Channel crossing, he repairs to an English tavern near the station. Soaking up the atmosphere, he asks himself: "Wasn't he already in London, whose smells, weather, citizens, food and even cutlery, were all about him? What could he expect to find over there, save fresh disappointments?" Finally, convinced that he has already made the long journey in his imagination, "a more-than-adequate substitute for the vulgar reality of actual experience," he's content to return home.

In his first travel book, *The Land of the Blessed Virgin: Sketches and Impressions in Andalusia* (1905), Somerset Maugham also argues that

> It is much better to read books of travel than to travel oneself; he really enjoys foreign lands who never goes abroad; and the man who stays at home, preserving his illusions, has certainly the best of it. How delightful is the anticipation as he looks over time-tables and books of photographs, forming delightful images of future pleasure! But the reality is full of disappointment, and the more famous the monument, the bitterer the disillusion.

This neat paradox never prevented Maugham from traveling and has consoled me for all the places that I did not get to see. I missed some places because I was too impatient, tired, or ignorant to know what I was losing. Others seemed exorbitantly expensive at the time; and I did not realize that they would become much more out of reach as I grew older and had more money. Sometimes, there was a lack of transport or an intractable bureaucracy. I now wish that I had been more persistent and grasped the principle of *backsheesh*. Inevitably, riots, revolutions, and wars have also stopped me in my tracks—bad timing and bad luck.

When I flew from London to Kenya in 1964, the plane stopped at Khartoum on the way down and Addis Ababa on the way back. But, eager to reach my desti-

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nation, I didn't stop in these exotic places. Khartoum, at the confluence of the Blue and the White Nile, recalled the revolt of the Mahdi, General Gordon's head on a spike, and Churchill's description of his cavalry charge at Omdurman as well as fierce sandstorms, unbearable heat, and unspeakable squalor. Evelyn Waugh's *Scoop* and Wilfred Thesiger's autobiography evoked the empty grandeur of Haile Selassie in Addis: of unexplored territory and lawless tribesmen, slaves in cages and barbaric spectacles, lion hunts with spears and Coptic shrines in secret caves.

When I reached East Africa, I tried to see two forbidden places. Lake Rudolf, in northern Kenya, was in the most remote and savage part of the country. Since there were no roads to Samburu and Turkana territory, I spent many hours at Nairobi airport, trying to get a lift on a missionary's flight. But the *shifta* wars were inflaming the border with Ethiopia, and the government discouraged planes—which had been shot at with bows and arrows—from going up there. Years later, I met Thesiger in London, and he nostalgically reminisced about his years with "my Samburu."

I got to Tanganyika soon after the bloody revolution in Zanzibar, in which the Africans had massacred many Arabs and driven the remnant off the island. Things got so dicey that government ministers visiting the place had been pushed out of planes on the way back to Dar-es-Salaam and had a long drop into the Indian Ocean. I still long for the fragrant smell of cloves, the elaborately carved Arab doorways, and the *dhows* that sail along the coast of Africa.

A round-the-world trip in 1966, following a year in Japan, led to more disappointments. I had an introduction to an Indian army officer in Gangtok, the capital of the Himalayan princely state of Sikkim, which was wedged between India and Chinese-controlled Tibet. The tense situation at the border prevented me from getting a visa in New Delhi, but I consoled myself with a visit to Darjeeling, on the southern frontier of Sikkim. Darjeeling had fine tea plantations, Tibetan refugees spinning their prayer wheels, and, as the clouds suddenly parted one morning, a miraculous view of the 28,170-foot-high Kangchenjunga, the third-highest mountain in the world.

After a horrible Aeroflot journey from Delhi to Moscow, I was told that my glued-on guide would take me anywhere within 50 miles of the capital. She would not go to Tolstoy's house at Yasnaya Polyana, however, though it was well within that boundary. So I had to imagine the birch forest, wooden house, huge ceramic stoves, peasants in bast shoes, wandering holy men, and the shallow pond where Tolstoy's wife, in a fit of pique, made a half-hearted attempt to drown herself. Communist bureaucracy also defeated me in Poland. I wanted to extend my three-day visa in order to see Leonardo's *Lady With an Ermine* in Krakow and the extermination camp in nearby Auschwitz. But I was unhelpfully informed that it would take three days to extend my visa—by which time it would have expired!

My timing was off a few years later as well. When T.E. Lawrence captured Aqaba during the Arab Revolt against the Turks, he longed for the military objective. Aqaba was all very well, but it was "far from Damascus." Inspired by *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, I secured visas for Syria and Lebanon—just before the Six Day War in June 1967. I missed the Street Called Straight and the Grand Bazaar in Damascus, and the formidable 12th-century crusaders' castle, Krak des Chevaliers. But on a later trip to Israel, I lunched in the Syrian Officers' Club on the captured Golan Heights. Lebanon, the Arab playground of the Levant, would, I imagined, be dissipated and corrupt—filled with swarthy locals in baggy trousers and curly-toed slippers, smoking water pipes and twirling worry beads. With drugs, gambling, and orgies on yachts, I could have led the life of a spoiled pasha and, absorbed in hedonism, might even have skipped the Temple of Jupiter in Baalbek.

On my second round-the-world trip in 1969, I arrived in Nigeria during the civil war in Biafra. The Lagos airport was manned by goons with machine guns, and they would not allow me to call an old friend in Ibadan who had powerful connections in the government. Though the war was in the east, no travel was permitted to the achingly evocative sultanates in northern Nigeria—Kaduna, Zaria, Kano, and Sokoto—on the edge of the Sahara Desert. Kano, with narrow, winding streets beneath a fortified mud wall, had a royal palace and a colorful open market filled with tattooed Tuareg traders from the far north. I had read about it in Joyce Cary's novels; a friend who taught there had been given his personal slave; and I desperately wanted to see the emir, shielded by colorful umbrellas and guarded by hyenas lurching on their chains, in full panoply on his way to Friday prayers at the Grand Mosque.

Completely surfeited and exhausted at the end of that three-month trip, I landed in Dakar, Senegal, just before midnight but dreaded the long taxi ride and search for a modest hotel in that dark and sprawling city. Noting, by chance, that there was a Pan Am flight to New York in a couple of hours, I impulsively took it. By curtailing my trip, I missed the island of Gorée, one of the first French settlements on the coast of Africa. Only a short ferry ride from Dakar, it has an old fort, colonial mansions, and slave quarters.

On a cruise to the Amazon in 1985, the chartered plane from Miami to Guadeloupe was 12 hours late, and I missed an evening on that delicious French Caribbean island. Instead of swaying palm trees and glistening sands, Creole patois and drumbeat dancing, I merely glimpsed, in the bleary dawn, the pastel-washed houses with all their shutters closed. While lecturing on another cruise to South Asia in 1988, I tried to spend a day in the Portuguese colony of Macao. But it was Chinese New Year; huge crowds from Hong Kong, pushing and spitting, were forcing their way onto the ferry to gamble in the casinos, and it was impossible to get a ticket. There were no Lusitanian banquets or painted pottery, no brightly colored churches in sunny, sloping squares.

Huysmans and Maugham were right about the disillusions of reality and the power of the imagination. The great tourist places of the world—St. Peter's, the Parthenon, and the Kremlin; the Taj Mahal, Borobudur, and Angkor Wat; Pagan, the Shwe Dagon pagoda, and the Great Wall of China; the gardens of Kyoto and Shalimar; the Alps and the Himalayas; the Amazon and the Nile—all seem more vivid in the mind than in actuality. Only Venice, Jerusalem, and Bali have met and even surpassed my expectations. In "The Tower," Yeats rhetorically asks: "Does the imagination dwell the most / Upon a woman won or a woman lost?" Once you have seen a place, you know what it is like, and it becomes part of your past. A place you have never seen, fixed in time and exactly as it always was, remains perfect in your imagination.

Jeffrey Meyers, author of Privileged Moments: Encounters With Writers *and* Inherited Risk: Errol and Sean Flynn in Hollywood and Vietnam, *has recently completed a life of Somerset Maugham.*

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by Srdja Trifkovic

Same Old Song and Dance

President George W. Bush painted a pleasingly simple black-and-white picture of the world in his State of the Union Address on January 28. It was a choreographed political speech with several statements of strong intent rather than a factual assessment of the nation's current "state." That America is strong and resolute, while Saddam Hussein is the embodiment of evil, was, not surprisingly, Mr. Bush's main theme. Unlike last year, there was no Axis of Evil and no mention of Osama bin Laden. The blanket assurance in the opening paragraph that "every danger and every enemy that threatens the American people" will be resolutely dealt with was intended to indicate that Mr. Bush is mindful of other flashpoints in the world—though they later paled to relative insignificance, as Iraq became the dominant foreign theme.

The first half of the speech was devoted to domestic issues, as the President sought to relaunch himself as a "compassionate conservative." As the main accomplishments of his administration's first two years, he listed education reform, the creation of the Department of Homeland Security, and tax relief. All this amounts to "a good start," Bush asserted, adding that his first goal for the coming year is to have an economy that grows fast enough to offer full employment. He deftly ascribed America's present economic woes mostly to factors beyond his control, such as terrorist attacks, and asserted that further tax reductions are the best way to assure economic growth.

Mr. Bush's statistical claims may come to haunt him, however. He first asserted that "92 million Americans" will enjoy tax relief this year, averaging $1,100 per household. While his commitment to reducing taxes is commendable in principle, this particular example was unfortunate and misleading, since the breaks disproportionately benefit the wealthiest taxpayers. That Mr. Bush chose to average out the windfall may indicate that he is aware of the unpleasant implications. In real life, the overwhelming majority of Americans will receive substantially less, while a small minority will get much, much more. Typical families in the middle of the income spectrum will receive just $256 in tax breaks, and about half of all filers will receive $100 or less.

President Bush's second example sounded no less questionable. He claimed that a family of four with an income of $40,000 would see its federal tax burden fall from $1,178 to $45 per year, not mentioning that the same family is likely to pay nearly three times that amount—about $3,100—in other payroll taxes. And, finally, his justification for eliminating the taxation of dividends ("to help the nearly ten million seniors") sounded disingenuous.

The President claims that tax breaks are needed to kick-start the economy; Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan, however, has expressed doubts. The $2.23 trillion Bush budget for 2003-04 included no costs for war against Iraq and a subsequent occupation. The cuts would add $1.1 trillion in deficits over five years to the nation's $6.4 trillion debt. The President had promised that tax cuts "would not come at the expense of Medicare and Social Security," yet he will have to borrow the money from Social Security surpluses only years before every dollar will be needed to fund the baby boomers' retirements.

The President has a difficult job defending his tax cuts against class-war attacks. His speech revealed the chinks in his armor in a way obviously not intended by its writers, and a cynic might add that a prehensile plutocracy packages its self-gratification with paeans to "the little guy." While the Democrats have their own version of class warfare (with a heavy admixture of race), the GOP doctrine is to make the little guy believe knocking the rich is not merely immoral but self-defeating, since "you, too, can be a millionaire." For the vast majority of the American middle class, however, the idea that they will become millionaires is simply an as-yet-ungrasped fantasy in the postbubble dispensation. It is far more realistic to concern yourself with keeping your job and pension. A secure sufficiency is not seven-figure wealth, but neither is it the penury of Argentina's former middle class.

Mr. Bush's promise that next year's budget would increase discretionary spending by only four percent ("Federal spending should not rise any faster than the paychecks of American families") is laudable, but it is unlikely to be fulfilled in view of the clouds of war and the array of spending programs that the President enumerated—notably, his "second goal" of "high quality, affordable health care for all Americans." He rejected a "nationalized health-care system that dictates coverage and rations care" yet proceeded to state that "health-care reform must begin with Medicare," which is "the binding commitment of a caring society." Accordingly, he pledged to commit an additional $400 billion over the next decade to reform and strengthen Medicare. Even a loyal Republican could be excused for wondering how those two objectives fit together, for what is Medicare if not a "nationalized health-care system" *par excellence*?

The most pleasant surprise in the President's address was his proposal to provide $1.2 billion for research "so that America can lead the world in developing clean, hydrogen-powered automobiles." The commitment "to make our air significantly cleaner, and our country much less dependent on foreign sources of energy" is good news, especially from a team with so many oilmen on board. No meaningful disengagement from the quagmire of the Middle East is possible without much reduced dependence on fossil fuels. Reducing and gradually ending unnecessary and harmful dependence on foreign oil is probably the easiest to achieve of all prerequisites for America's survival.

Mr. Bush's fourth goal, "to apply the compassion of America to the deepest problems of America," smacked of his father's gooey "thousand points of light," with equal doses of New Age and born-again rhetoric: "The homeless, the fatherless, the addicted" will be helped

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through the "wonder-working power in the goodness, and idealism, and faith of the American people."

From his faith-based initiatives, Mr. Bush abruptly turned to foreign affairs with the Wilsonian assertion that "the qualities of courage and compassion that we strive for in America also determine our conduct abroad." He started with Afghanistan, where "we helped liberate an oppressed people . . . and we will continue helping them secure their country, rebuild their society, and educate all their children—boys and girls." This was an exact encore of last year's State of the Union Address, in which he said that, in Afghanistan, the United States had "freed a country from brutal oppression," while her women, formerly "captives in their own homes, forbidden from working or going to school," are now free.

The difference is that, a year later, Afghanistan is anything but a showcase of America's global benevolence in action. Liberating Afghani girls and women was never among the stated objectives of the military action, and the embarrassing failure to capture or track Bin Laden was covered up by the allegedly splendid results of America's new role as the harbinger of progress and empowerer of the underprivileged around the world.

Mr. Bush went on to say that "we must remember our calling, as a blessed country, to make this world better." This approach to world affairs is disastrous: A realistic attachment to the national interest—the art of the diplomatically possible—has the potential to realize moral purposes, while the mantle of morality and alleged American exceptionalism ("blessed" by whom? where? when? how? why?) has led straight to the moral collapse of interventions in the Balkans over the past decade. This was the weakest part of the speech by far. Its focus on AIDS in Africa was a touchy-feely, politically correct irrelevance: the problem is indeed lamentable but hardly relevant, let alone vital, to the state of the Union. All of the rhetoric about AIDS policy, mentoring, and Afghani women was put in the speech as a rhetorical counterpoint to Iraq. Whether these are good or bad ideas is beside the point. The administration most likely has no intention to pursue any of them.

Mr. Bush's subsequent rapid transition from natural plagues, through the "man-made evil of terrorism," to Iraq was sketchy. Saddam was introduced with the now customary comparison to Hitler, while the other two members of last year's Axis of Evil, Iran and North Korea, were treated perfunctorily and effectively dismissed for the moment. ("Different threats require different strategies.") Instead of explaining why Iraq is more pressing than North Korea—in view of the latter's confirmed nuclear ambitions and emerging arsenal—Mr. Bush reversed the argument by claiming that we "must learn the lessons of the Korean peninsula and not allow an even greater threat to rise up in Iraq."

The elaboration of that alleged threat—including a list of old self-degradable biological and chemical materials—was nothing new. Mr. Bush also graphically referred to Saddam's brutality and human-rights violations, but we have heard it all before from Mr. Blair. (If such unpleasant practices call for military intervention, then the President should deal with Saudi Arabia—the worst Islamo-fascist freak show on Earth—first and foremost.) He also referred to the British claim that Iraq recently tried to acquire uranium from Africa and to unnamed defectors who talked of biological-weapons labs—but such claims are difficult to substantiate.

The President's direct and unambiguous claim that "Saddam Hussein aids and protects terrorists, including members of Al Qaeda," had never before been stated so authoritatively. Had it been provable, it would have given him the smoking gun he needed to get the recalcitrant allies on board. As it happened, Mr. Bush's statement set expectations too high: The evidence Mr. Powell subsequently offered to the U.N. Security Council on February 5 fell short of conclusive and caused a backlash among America's reluctant European partners.

The final lines of the speech brought us back to the President's messianic view of America and her role in the world: The call of history has come to the right country; we exercise power without conquest and sacrifice for the liberty of strangers; we know that freedom is the right of every person and the future of every nation ("The liberty we prize is not America's gift to the world; it is God's gift to humanity").

That was megalomaniacal. To deal with various threats effectively and on the basis of consensual leadership, the United States should discard the pernicious notion of her "exceptionalism." The implication that America is not only wise but virtuous, and that her foreign policy is influenced by values and not by prejudices, is preposterous. It hinders interest-based alliances and blurs the clarity of debate, which, in the case of Iraq, hardly existed outside the gnostic mantras of Washingtonian ideologues. That the claim of exceptionalism makes literally billions of people all over the world very angry is neither here nor there; it should, however, irritate all real Americans, whose sense of common decency and modesty must be offended by such hubristic ravings.

This year's State of the Union Address, even more than that of 2002, shows that the President and his national security team have not grasped the main lesson of the tragedy of September 11. The danger to ordinary Americans will remain with us as long as the United States remains committed to an unrestrained projection of her power everywhere in the world. Instead of realizing that the threat to America exists because of the policy of global hegemony, Mr. Bush persists in the view that this hegemony is the divinely ordained, morally obligatory, open-ended, and self-justifying global mandate of the United States. As long as that remains so, the terrorist threat to America will be unlimited and permanent.

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POLITICS

Curses Not Loud But Deep

by John Kilgore

My dog does not understand cars. An alarmist where a vacuum cleaner or thunder is concerned, a realist in regard to tomcats and other dogs, she simply lacks any concept of this genuine menace to her mortal tenure. If you let her, she will dash across a street the instant the impulse takes her, absolutely without reference to the traffic. Millions of years of evolution have pulled her eyes to the front of her skull and riveted her attention dead ahead, filling her with the predator's cheery—and, it turns out, entirely false—assurance that nothing important can be crossing at right angles.

Of course, it is not just dogs that have this difficulty in understanding where their danger lies, in this unnatural modern world of ours. Insects cannot cope with point-source radiation, which fouls their navigation systems and makes them fly by the millions into porch lights and streetlamps. That moth spiraling toward the candle flame, to the fascination of poets, understands itself to be traveling in a straight line. Evolution is *slow* and has not yet conjured into existence the cognitive resources (or sheer terror of candles) that might allow it to escape the trap. Perhaps evolution never will, because insects breed so extravagantly, hatching out in billions and then dying on a vast assortment of pretexts, that the toll of porch bulbs and bug zappers may not really amount to much. Likewise, the emergence of a properly car-terrified dog has undoubtedly been delayed by the dynamics of dog reproduction. A mutt that dashes under the wheels of a Jeep Cherokee in its seventh year could easily have passed on its genes to 50 offspring by then, assuming ideal breeding conditions. That's 50 chances to send the DNA for car-stupidness on to eternity versus no chances at all for a seven-year-old *Homo sapiens* with the same inclinations. Another way of putting this is that, from a dog's own point of view (or, anyway, from evolution's), getting run over and killed is no big deal.

Less insouciant but far more clever, we humans have invented culture, the trump card we play against evolution, accelerating a thousandfold the process whereby we acquire new traits, new strategies, new equipment. But even for us, there is a lag time, a learning curve to be mastered before we shiver and shudder at the right things. In the world I remember from the 50's, everyone drank, everyone smoked, no one worried about cholesterol. Cars did not have seat belts, and car seats were trifling affairs of vinyl and aluminum that hooked over the tops of seats, suspending the baby in more or less the ideal position to be launched through the windshield in a crash. At the end of a dinner party, it was not thought strange to let your guests stagger off across the lawn, barely able to find their cars. At least some of this was owing to the sheer newness of mass automobile ownership, the lack of time needed to fine-tune the collective perception of danger. Cultural evolution may be fast, but it's not instantaneous.

Moreover, evolution has a way of trumping culture *back*, when our clever solutions become, in their turn, the chief dangers confronting us: Witness drugs, pollution, and weapons. With weapons in particular, so much our current concern, our intuitions seem decidedly deficient. In World War I, infantrymen consistently reported artillery as the most lethal of the many dangers in their nightmare existence. Why wouldn't they, after all? The big shells shattered eardrums, splintered trees, cratered the earth, and turned flesh to mincemeat whenever they encountered it. By contrast, the *rat-a-tat* of machine guns must have seemed almost comforting, a hazard on a human scale at which they could, at least, shoot back. But instinct and feeling were poor guides to battlefield reality, for machine guns took far more lives than artillery did. And, of course, such misperceptions among the rank and file were nothing compared to those of the men at the top. With their archaic notions of combat and strategy—underevolved cultural equipment, you might say—their famous inability to grasp the deadliness of the arms they commanded, the blundering generals and statesmen in charge of World War I furnished a rather precise analogy of the dim brain that guides the moth to a flame. A gruesome coda to the butchery came when soldiers returning from the front caused a worldwide flu epidemic that proved the deadliest weapon of all, inflicting more casualties in six months than the rest had done in five years. Dashing across the street to claim its prize at last, the dog of war was flattened by the speeding truck of plague.

From all this, I draw a grand historical and epistemological principle: It's Hard To Know What To Be Afraid Of. The principle seems crucially relevant, just now, because of the grand, grim national adventure on which we embarked in September 2001. Since then our taciturn, dogged, apparently sincere President has taken us through Afghanistan, quite successfully, and has all but guaranteed that Iraq is next. North Korea looms in the middle distance, however gratuitously, and Iran beyond that. After that, who knows? Pundits have at least suggested that interventions in such places as Colombia, Pakistan, and the Sudan are thinkable for a variety of apocalyptic, what-choice-do-we-have rationales. Comparisons to Napoleon at the Russian frontier, to the Athenians disembarking before Syracuse, would no doubt be excessive. But we find ourselves in unfamiliar territory, launched on a grand expedition whose ultimate aim (Hegemony? Mere security? Is there a difference?) lies shrouded in mist. This is worrisome, even if, to this point, casualties remain low and confidence high.

George II, our leader on the expedition, has been widely praised for his *instincts*, which are held to be as sound as his everyday speech is dubious and faltering. "Far better grounded than Clinton," David Gergen described him the other night, going on to recall Isaiah Berlin's reflection that, in politics, the hedgehog often succeeds better than the fox, by dint of better focus. Critics complain that the rationale for invading Iraq is unclear, but it may actually be too clear, too simply from the heart, an argument that can be reduced to its core aphorisms in a single PowerPoint session:

- Never put off till tomorrow what you can do today.

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- Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me.
- Inaction is a form of action.
- He who hesitates is lost.
- You don't get the job done if you won't get your hands dirty.
- Go it alone if you have to.
- Play the hand you're dealt.
- Sooner or later you have to stand up to a bully, so it might as well be sooner.

To give credit where credit is due, in the State of the Union Address Bush articulated the logic of preemption as well as anyone could. "Since when do terrorists serve notice that they are going to attack?" he demanded. "Imagine those same nineteen hijackers with other weapons and other plans, this time armed by Saddam Hussein. It would take just one vial, one canister, one crate slipped into this country to bring about a day of horror like none we have ever known." There, in a nutshell, is the tactical, technical side of our dilemma: the terrible power of the weapons; the disproportionate ease of making, concealing, smuggling, and finally using them.

My problem, however, is the strange absence of two other aphorisms, formerly beloved of the American right:

- Guns don't kill people; people kill people.
- When guns are illegal, only criminals will have guns.

When did disarmament, supposedly unworkable here at home, become the Holy Grail of our foreign policy? If we can't keep Saturday-night specials off the streets of Washington, can we really hope to keep backpack nukes out of the country?

I count it all to the good that the debate over Iraq has been framed so much as a contest of fears, as in, "What is really more dangerous here—acting or waiting?" Fear, these days, is sensible, salutary; fear is good. But I am afraid that we will fear the wrong thing. When it looks overseas, the Bush administration seems to locate our danger in the weapons, not in the people, and it proposes to control or destroy the hardware while it takes for granted that an enterprising *imam* can always find 19 more suicide troops. Finally, though, as September 11 proved, almost anything is a weapon if you want it to be. What if we imagine those same 19 terrorists, armed any way you like, but now multiplied to legions? Which scenario is truly more dangerous?

Like many English teachers, I learn too much of my political theory from Shakespeare; so, at the end of these rambles, I find myself thinking, unfairly but insistently, of another great "misunderestimator"—Macbeth. Early on, the ambitious Thane is persuaded that a single resort to violence—limited, surgical, soon over—will solve his problems. Instead, of course, he finds that one murder requires another and then another, until he finds himself fatally isolated, all Scotland suddenly on the march against him, including many of the trees. In place of the "honour, love, obedience, troops of friends" that he might have enjoyed in old age, his obsessive pursuit of security has brought him "Curses not loud but deep, mouth-honour, breath, / Which the poor heart would fain deny, and dare not."

Curses not loud but deep: There lies, I think, the real danger, the preeminent one, in this age when the weapons themselves have grown so terrifying and made the logic of the offensive so compelling. I scorn appeasement, procrastination, and wishful thinking as much as the next cowboy. But the fundamental problem confronting the nation is political and diplomatic, not military: how to retain the world's respect *and* its good will. Without both, Shakespeare seems to hint, you eventually face more secret adversaries than you can ever root out, more fanatical enemies than you will ever keep away.

John Kilgore teaches English at Eastern Illinois University.

MUSIC

Weeds and Habitats

by Tom Sheeley

The art and music of Western civilization have gone through a transformation that mirrors the modern transformation of community. Instead of the rich and varied tapestry of art forms and people—the products of subsidiarity—we suffer from a monotonous regularity. Not to worry, say the foppish multiculturalists; this lack of variance is actually "diversity." *Diversity*, as it resounds through the Dewey camps of education as well as society at large, really means *conformity*.

This conformity has resulted from the alien presence known as "man"—a caricature of real men and women that is neither American, nor European, nor of any nation or culture save that of the globalists' nightmare.

As some men believe that nations can be created by drawing lines on a map, so many of the celebrities of modern music have embraced the idea that music can be created simply by placing notes on a staff. As some men have devolved their own national and cultural particularities, some music has preceded apace, glorifying an abstract universal that is alien to any nation or culture. How fitting that a world that only acknowledges superficial cultural differences and wages war to enforce artificial borders should produce music that, at best, chirps happily about diversity in Esperanto.

In the 19th century, small and functional polities were destroyed by those captivated by the idea of union. During the 20th century, the world that World War I made safe for bolshevism and Nazism bred atonality with doctrinaire autonomy, creating a new and uniformly mediocre type of music. As central planners in every clime liberated the tapestry of civilization by unraveling it, composers of the McModern school cast aspersions on the very sense of cultivation necessary for any real diversity in art.

Spurious systems of order, such as 12-tone music, and caricatures of choice and freedom, such as Dada art and "chance music," began to make the formal and harmonic devices that had, for centuries, provided wonderfully rich differentiation appear to be the artistic equivalent of kulaks.

Arnold Schoenberg, revered in many academic texts as a martyr who was persecuted by the Nazis for his ostensibly freethinking approach to harmony, threw off the supposed hegemony of functional harmony, creating the "12-tone system," which is based on a tonal matrix of mechanical equality wherein the function of each note depends solely on its place in an artificial scale. Committed to its place in the artificial common order, each note imitates the Nazi slogan "Public good must precede individual good."

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A perfect synthesis of musical painting by numbers with the aural equivalent of the ant farm, this ersatz community of notes is right at home with the bureaucratic vision of making the world safe for central planning. The 12-tone ideal reminds us that our very purpose and spirit are embodied in the degree to which we conform to the system.

Manuel Ponce, who wrote what is arguably some of the greatest literature for the classic guitar, said of the 12-tone system:

> To obtain a clearer idea of Schoenberg's doctrine, it will suffice for us to imagine a poet who so desires absolute originality that he fabricates verses with syllables of different words, selected by chance, that have no relation to each other either grammatically or ideologically. Our poet then forms words that only someone no longer in need of his senses can possibly understand. This same author then finds himself in straits to preserve these fantastic combinations of syllables that will eventually form a new vocabulary for either his own personal use or for the use of those privileged spirits that are able to understand it.

Ponce's description of Schoenberg's intellectual dishonesty can also be applied to true community under the thumb of the modern state. First, make it incoherent; then, do all you can to preserve it.

Ponce argued that, without the freedom provided by an historical authority, the composer is left with nothing but his instincts as a guide. Applying that concept to society, we discover that the planned, egalitarian, and enlightened community (or nation or world) is nescient of human nature. With instinct as our only guide in a world that refuses to acknowledge that greed, cruelty, and exploitation are intrinsic to uncultivated human character, society grows more and more barbaric. Is it any wonder, then, that the music that follows such a philosophy is so much like the modern state—proscriptive, boring, and agitating all at once?

Over time, planned systems of incoherence give way to the virulently postmodern, embracing the idea that life and art without editing are the very acme of freedom. When all beauty is really just a matter of perception, we will have, of course, more "options" for inclusiveness, artistic expression, *etc.*—which explains why postmodernist Karlheinz Stockhausen could call the destruction of the World Trade Center "one of the greatest works of art of the modern world."

Postmodern composer John Cage has said that his "chance operations" were meant to free his work from his own desires so that the music could be more like nature in its processes. We write music, you see, not to add to the beauty of nature but to call "natural" our limited perceptions of what we imagine to be random. Thus, postmodernism gives us the freedom to make a parody of Creation. What is nature without man? Of what value is musical composition that takes the freedom gained from historical authority for granted? What is creativity without editing? What is art or civilization without love and cultivation? Postmodern thought ignores these questions and, thus, negates man's place in nature by reducing cultivation to the level of a social science. Like mass democracy and today's practice of calling a refusal to defend our communities from harmful alien influences "tolerance and diversity," music that is created from this fundamental misunderstanding of nature seeks to invent universals by blurring real differences and, in so doing, actually destroys the very freedom it claims to foster by limiting our discretion. If *everything* is art, then *nothing* is art, and talking about artistic freedom in this context is absurd.

The simple truth is that the parts of a system must be both integrated and sovereign in order for it to function properly. Otherwise, there can be no harmony—in music or in civilization.

To create chords, the building blocks of harmony, you must have at least two notes that are sovereign yet possess an attraction to each other. Great composers, understanding the natural affinity of certain notes, resolve the tension that results from these notes being placed in relation to other notes for which they have no natural affinity. When the natural affinity of notes is seen as an arbitrary "construct," the very concept of harmony becomes absurd. In the same vein, people who share nothing—save that they pay taxes in order to live the same cookie-cutter lives in artificial neighborhoods—can hardly be called a "community."

In reducing people and sounds to arbitrary combinations, modern thought cannot understand freedom. The very richness of Creation elucidates man's place in nature. As men created in the image of God, the very *person* in us that acts either to weed or to cultivate is formed by the honing of character, and we do this by tempering our instincts, likes, and dislikes by an authority based on the principles of nurturing. Contrary to the nostrums of liberal thought, there simply is no system of procedures or laws that can replace human caring or the celebration of life and love in the creation of art or community. Without the understanding that art, life, and liberty are about living, enjoying, and celebrating Creation, such words as *choice*, *options*, *diversity*, *inclusion*, and *freedom* are nothing more than conjuring devices in the socialists' bag of tricks.

Postmodernists argue that people too often confuse beauty with what is easy on the ears—a practice common to saps and sissies, to paraphrase the Connecticut crackpot Charles Ives. Contrasting Ives' thought with his action, it is hard to tell if, to use his own words, he is either lying or simply being stupid. His thought is characterized by hypocrisy, excusing or ignoring plutocracy in government while blustering about the "common man." Cheerleading for mass democracy in the country and pure autonomy in composition, he simultaneously saluted the extraconstitutional shenanigans of Abraham Lincoln and Woodrow Wilson as being "beyond mere politics"—alluding, of course, to those "higher law" shibboleths that we have come to expect from the worst despots and mischief-makers in modern history. And, he argued, no real music could be made until the "last man willing to make a living from it was dead and gone forever." Though making a living by being an artist is the ultimate sissified sin, it is apparently the height of masculinity and freedom for underwriters of mercantilist war debt to make a living hawking their wares. Ives was so committed to Wilson's blundering that he suffered a massive heart attack after arguing with FDR over the necessity of selling Liberty Bonds at a price that the "man on the street" could afford.

Ives represents the modern state and modern art rolled into one. He celebrated mass man's democratic superstitions: "[T]o an insurance man, there is an average man and he represents humanity." Much of his music reflects what mass democracy would eventually make the average American town look like.

For example, in "Putnam's Camp" we hear familiar tunes buried in an alphabet soup of egalitarian, homogeneous noise. They represent in sound the effect of see-

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ing your church or corner grocery bravely peering out of the habitat of what is called the "workforce" in modern democratic parlance: the undiversified landscape of fast-food chains, freeways, strip malls, and megastores.

"Where aliens thrive, ecological diversity declines" has been the mantra of the National Park Service as it attempts to eradicate nonnative plants at the Grand Canyon, and, for those of us struggling to keep the real America alive, it should be our mantra as well. In the arts, the postmodern priests of the "Inclusition" encourage us, in essence, to water the weeds and celebrate their diversity—to encourage listening, reading, and viewing space to be overgrown with unreflective celebrations of the alien, of mass man's tortured images, stories, and noises. In America, we find a habitat in which mass immigration crowds out the natural diversity of community; where mercantilism squelches local economy and republican government; where the practical and administrative aspects of the rule of law are hamstrung by teleocratic philosophy; where a massive and iatrogenic therapeutic state regenerates itself as it disables any real solution to social problems; and where McFlux thrives like camel thorn on a Grand Canyon beach, crowding out the natives as it destroys their natural habitat.

Richard M. Weaver wrote that the political class could not bring us up out of the swamp of 19th-century scientific superstition and that,

> barring the advent of an illumination by some fateful personality, the task falls upon poets, artists and intellectuals, upon workers in the timeless . . . they alone can impress us with some splendid image of man in a morally designed world, ennobled by the conception of the transcendent.

Weaver's prescription is right on the mark; still, many art celebrities continue to represent in sound, story, and image the modern state's weed patch of homogeneous materialism, determinism, and fatalism. Making his paeans to the alien creature, mass man—who owes his allegiance to nothing save mass production and consumption—has been only too eager to *resist* the very principles of cultivation that must precede any real art or community.

In this wasteland, we must celebrate real diversity by asserting particularity. We *can* defy mass-produced slave art and culture by cultivating our art, our lives, and our homes with love and care in the oases of civilization where this timeless work has always been done—and, with fortitude, will continue to be done—in the real America.

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SOCIETY

The SLA and the Child Experts

by B.K. Eakman

If there ever was a case to be made against the therapeutic approach to childrearing—packaged as "parenting" by three decades of child psychologists—the pathetic image of four aging, 1970's-era radicals, who gave themselves the silly name "Symbionese Liberation Army," was it. I cannot help but wonder how differently the lives of Michael Bortin, William Harris, Kathleen Soliah (a.k.a. Sara Jane Olson), and Emily Montague might have turned out had they been blessed with an earlier, less "understanding" generation of parents—adults not afraid to put their foot down on youthful excess.

Today, of course, the war against authority has come full circle. The kiddie subculture of popularity as it first appeared in the mid-1950's has morphed from Gidget to gross-out and gangsterism. And it extends to ever-younger age groups—with ever-deadlier consequences. A child's smallest whim, no matter how fleeting or ludicrous, is deemed worthy of serious debate. Little Johnny wants to flush his teddy bear down the commode? Let's discuss it.

The SLA bunch came of age in that period between the 50's and the 70's, when children were first intoxicated with their own importance. Bortin, Harris, Soliah, Montague, and James Kilgore, their colleague in mayhem, were nothing more than immature, overgrown teenagers who didn't have enough to do. All that mush about "bourgeois" values, antiwar activism, and rage against "fascist insects" was simply an attention-getting device. What these young people were really saying was: "Look at me! Look at me!"

Their great-grandparents, had they been around, would have recognized this phase and packed these brats off to Granddad's farm to work off some of that hyperventilation and fervor. After a little isolation from their peers and hard, physical labor humbled them, they might have been allowed to continue their education—on their *own* dime, which is always good insurance against getting into trouble.

Now that the four have grown up, been brought to justice, and been convicted, they and others like them—Leslie van Hooten comes to mind—understand their errors only too well. Van Hooten, a 1967 high-school cheerleader, was once the epitome of all-American cute. As a Charles Manson protégé, however, she helped stab actress Sharon Tate some ten times and has languished in prison since 1969. Repeatedly seeking parole, to no avail, Van Hooten has admitted that she can hardly stand to think about the events that put her where she is today or about how naive, insolent, and pompous she was even during her trial. Manson, a perpetually inebriated, charismatic thug, talked her and others into drug-and-sex orgies. She has said that, if Manson had told them they were all "little fairies that had suddenly sprouted wings," they all would have believed him. Pushing age 50, she is probably telling the truth.

The recently convicted SLA members are making similar comments, tearfully recalling their arrogant behavior and the grief they caused victims and their families. Despite what is in store for them, all admit to being somewhat relieved to have been caught. Emily Harris says that "not a day went by" over the past 25 years that she did not recall her actions with deep regret.

What the child "experts" cannot seem to get through their heads is that the Harrises, Soliahs, Bortins, and Van Hootens are not, and *were* not, mentally ill. They were not abused or traumatized children from bad homes, either; they were just smart hooligans. Most were followers, desperate to be popular and noticed, and easily led by a stronger, charismatic personality into pursuing make-believe games. But the game called "Let's Be Revolutionaries" got out of hand. Assassination, kidnapping, and pipe bombings cried out for a mature, authoritative adult with

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the strength of character to break up the group, stop the behavior, and channel the SLA's loose energies in another direction.

Instead, these kids were given professional agitators—countercultural entertainers and leftist professors who egged them on. They were duped by trained propagandists who knew how to identify young firebrands and push the buttons of rebellion. The real ringleaders are always adults—all guilty of contributing to the delinquency of minors—acting behind the scenes and through third parties to ensure that their younger charges take the fall.

After these drugstore radicals had exhausted their repertoire of atrocities and grown up, those who were not permanently damaged by drugs changed their attitudes. Most moved quickly to change their identities and localities and set about leading the types of middle-class lives they had once belittled, becoming (variously) spouses, parents, a flooring contractor, an actress in a community theater, a volunteer, even a private eye.

The trouble is, they really did hurt people. Their victims have paid an awful price—some still living, more than 30 years later, with painful and debilitating injuries—which is why there can be no statute of limitations on such crimes.

None of the news accounts mentioned how the SLA members' *parents* might be feeling now. I suspect a few privately wish that the nincompoops who dished out the parenting advice could somehow be brought to justice, too.

These parents, like all postwar parents, were advised that youngsters "have a right to make their own mistakes" and "a right to their own values." After just 15 years of such foolishness, children became noticeably bolder. Sent to their rooms for unacceptable conduct, many teenagers loaded up their backpacks and climbed out the window. As a young teacher in those years, I saw exasperated parents whose attempts to salvage their children with a strengthened disciplinary regimen were usually too little, too late. Typically, the result was a sudden blowup, ending with their kids being, in effect, subsidized to leave home for good.

Child psychologists, including school guidance counselors, have served as "useful idiots" in the ongoing leftist war to undermine free societies. Back in the 50's, parents were first admonished to let toddlers "express themselves," no matter how inappropriately, lest they become "inhibited" and "rigid." Parents who balked were characterized as controlling, dogmatic, and uptight.

Scores of articles from the 50's and 60's urged parents to "stop giving kids the FBI treatment"—that is, stop demanding to know who your children are playing with, where they are going, and whether a responsible adult will be present. Instead, parents were supposed to give their kids "space." Parenting books and articles castigated parents for "snooping" in their teenagers' belongings, for being judgmental and inflexible, for moralizing and lecturing. Kids had "a right to privacy" and "wouldn't listen anyway."

Now, 35 years later, government-sponsored ads tell parents that they are the "Anti-Drug," that kids really *do* listen and *want* adults to set limits. A Dartmouth Medical School study published by the *American Academy of Pediatrics* even demonstrated that parents' lectures have a "positive impact" on such teenage behaviors as smoking and drug use—even when parents themselves engage in such activities! "Parents underestimate their influence . . . [and] have an overly heightened concern about coming down hard on their kids . . . ," reported Dr. James Sargent, associate professor of pediatrics at Dartmouth.

This apparent reversal, however, has not filtered down to university departments of education and psychology, let alone to public-school teachers and most parents. Mothers are still being advised that their offspring are better off in daycare than at home, so they will be "socialized" and "ready to learn." Federal and state education agencies continue to call for more early-childhood programs.

From a psychologist's point of view, it may seem necessary to pitch such "diseases" as hyperactivity and attention-deficit disorder—along with the obligatory drug *du jour*—to cover for the fact that 40 years of idiotic parenting advice has produced a generation that never acquired the mental discipline to focus. Rarely admonished to finish anything they started and overstimulated with a succession of nonstop games, extracurricular activities, and entertainment, young adults have become so distracted that they find concentration an overwhelming chore. Predictably, they cannot help their own children to focus, and they accept the bogus diagnoses as gospel.

Psychologists have taken the next step, claiming that most behaviors are hardwired, so parents should not agonize over something they cannot help. Conscience, guilt, and shame are deemed dangerous to mental health. Regular behavioral screening, together with up-to-date psychological profiles of each child, are supposed to identify any potential Symbionese Liberation Army-types. These devices turn out to be about as helpful as the criminal profiles circulated on the Beltway snipers who terrorized Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia for almost a month before police finally arrested two black Islamic males who bore no resemblance to the profiles.

The latest fad is to blame children's unformed character on "a biochemical imbalance in the brain," which has spawned a new field known as biopsychiatry. The Columbine killers (and the notorious child shooters in Kentucky, Oregon, and California) were all on drugs for their so-called chemical imbalances *before* they put holes through their classmates, teachers, or parents.

Parents who take the "experts'" advice have developed a schizophrenic approach to rearing children. On the one hand, they have been subjected to ads and research reversing, even attacking, the permissive wisdom of the postwar experts. On the other, they face the ugly specter of child-advocacy extremism, especially prevalent on public-school campuses, which strips away the last vestiges of their authority.

Child advocacy emerged as a reaction to parental abdication. Motherhood itself was denigrated as demeaning. Worse, zealots in the schools brooked no interference in matters relating to controversial sex education, religious expression, and programs promoting their leftist political agenda. As parents were increasingly told that what happened to their children at school was none of their business, many of them grew weary of the constant battles with school staff and acquiesced. *You want to raise my kids? Fine. Take them.* The result was conveniently interpreted by a new generation of experts as "child neglect," which left the child in need of an "advocate."

Strict parents remain pariahs because strictness is indelibly linked to evil authoritarianism. This charge, passed along to them by their leftist mentors, was the message of the young SLA-era protesters.

Today's student demonstrators, who periodically vent their spleen whenever dignitaries meet in Seattle or Washington, D.C., carry none of the "conscience" and righteous indignation—misguided or

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not—of even the poorly informed SLA-era protesters. Only the ritual yelling, chanting, vandalism, and brawling are the same.

But with the SLA outlaws now sitting in cells, devoid of political passion or cries for social justice, questions remain for their contemporaries fortunate enough to be reading of their capture and conviction instead of sitting in their place. Is the cause of freedom and our children's future being served by continuing to rely on the pronouncements of child experts, including their representatives in the schools and government? Should child psychology retain any credibility? Would it perhaps have been kinder for the parents of a Leslie van Hooten or an Emily Harris to have yanked their kids out of school and even chained them to their beds, if necessary—with food and water and specified "bathroom breaks," as in a jail—until they showed some measure of common sense?

Overly harsh? Child abuse? Perhaps we should ask the once-great radicals of the SLA.

B.K. Eakman, a former teacher, is executive director of the National Education Consortium and the author of Cloning of the American Mind: Eradicating Morality Through Education *(Huntington House).*

RELIGION

Philokalia

by Fr. Hugh Barbour, O. Praem

"He was a wicked man, but the Lord forgave him." One fine spring day in my sophomore year of college, I joined my paternal grandmother on her more-or-less daily walk from her house out to the cemetery of my parent's hometown in Eastern North Carolina. This was her characteristically pointed and Christian evaluation of a man whose tomb rose at the edge of the yard; far more monumental than the others, it was decorated on all four sides with Masonic symbols and inscribed with third-rate (or so I thought then—I was a sophomore, after all) verse. My grandmother's particular judgment was pronounced as she pointed to some words carved in the stone above all the verbal and pictographic *arcana*: "O Lord, be merciful to me, a poor sinner."

My grandmother was deeply, devotedly Protestant, and I had been reared in an Anglo-Catholic rectory, but, by then, I had become a Catholic *simpliciter*. I remember thinking that it was all a bit rich for my taste, this juxtaposition of strange ritual references with the simplicity of an act of contrition. Then I had a little flash of intuition: *Maybe this is the way* Protestants *feel when confronted with* Roman *liturgy or devotion*. I was soon to have confirmation of this insight. Later in the week, I dragged a moderately curious male cousin to Mass in the town's small Catholic Church. It was a no-frills, spoken vernacular *Novus Ordo*, and so, not surprisingly, he said that it wasn't as strange as he had expected it to be; but, he added, unable to contain himself: "It's pretty weird that boys that can't marry go around kissing Bibles. I bet they kiss those statues, too." Now, my cousin was no lubriciously minded Freudian. No, he was merely an instinctive iconoclast, suspicious of the living, bodily iconography of celibacy and of the artifice of sacred images. These memories, for which I am so grateful, have led me both to an understanding of what motivates a certain kind of Christian iconoclast—or, better, *iconophobe*—and also to an appreciation of the condition *sine qua non* for being an authentically Christian iconodule.

Anglicans jocosely switch the words of their *Venite* at Morning Prayer: "O worship the Lord in the holiness of beauty." A certain Wildean inversion of the proper order of religious experience is the great enemy of true, Christian image worship and a concrete, ascetical—albeit insufficient—justification for the refusal to venerate the icons. Saint Augustine can enlighten us here, as he comments on the Old Latin version of Psalm 95 (96 in the Hebrew):

> *Confession and beauty are fitting in his presence.* Are you in love with beauty? Do you want to be beautiful? Then confess. The psalm did not say "beauty and confession," but "confession and beauty." You have been ugly, so confess and become beautiful. You were a sinner, but confess and become righteous. You were able to make yourself foul, but you cannot make yourself fair. What a bridegroom we have: One who loved a soiled bride in order to make her beautiful! "What do you mean?" someone asks. "In what sense did He love a soiled bride?" Remember what He told us: *I came to call not the just, but sinners.* But what about those sinners whom you call, Lord: do you mean them to remain sinners? "No," he replies. But how can they cease to be sinners? *Confession and beauty are fitting in His presence.* They confess their sins . . . There you find confession and beauty. We are in love with beauty, so let us first opt for confession, that beauty may follow.

"Low Church" Protestantism has always seen genuine Christianity as a matter of personal repentance and redemption and liturgical Christianity as, at best, negligent of these things, concerned with aesthetics, ceremony, and the social influence of the hierarchy. "High Church, low morals" an evangelical-wag friend of mine used to say. It is this evaluation of the image-worshiping and image-conscious Catholic that seems to justify the evangelical's or Calvinist's aversion to the icon.

Surely the kiss, the bodily gesture which so impressed my not-kissing cousin, is, of all touches, the most evidently expressive of aesthetic appreciation, a man's instinctive movement to that which is loved as beautiful. The tradition of the Roman liturgy accompanies the priest's kiss of the altar with the words *May you deign to pardon all my sins* and his kiss of the Gospel with the invocation *By the words of the Gospel may our sins be blotted out.* The only statue in the Roman rite that the worshiper is directed to kiss is the crucifix on Good Friday, as a sign of repentance, on bended knee. In the Latin West, the bow or genuflection toward an image or hierarch was traditionally called a *venia*, a request for pardon. In its most ancient and austere tradition, the Old Roman, the image-worshiping Christian world always accompanies the veneration of the beautiful with the sense and the seeking of forgiveness.

In his *Rule*, St. Augustine quotes Sirach 44's eulogy of the saints, as he exhorts his brethren to be "lovers of spiritual beauty." In Augustine's day, as later in the middle ages, the word *conversion* referred to a life lived in monastic repentance, modeled on the common life of the saints of old:

> Let us praise men of renown, and our fathers in their generation.

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> The Lord hath wrought great glory through his magnificence from the beginning. Such as have borne rule in their dominions, men of great power and endued with their wisdom, shewing forth in the prophets the dignity of prophets, and ruling over the present people, and by the strength of wisdom instructing the people in most holy words. Such as by their skill sought out musical tunes and published canticles of the scriptures. Rich men in virtue, lovers of beauty: living at peace in their houses . . . Moses was beloved of God and men: whose memory is in benediction . . . Before him there were none so beautiful, even from the beginning."

It is not for nothing that the veneration of saints and their images found its greatest development through the monastic tradition in both East and West, which was precisely the cultivation of spiritual beauty through a life of repentance and conversion in imitation of the saints. Yet the full development of the cult of images represents a danger that engenders an anxious reaction. The sincere Christian iconophobe does not suspect the ideal represented by the saint and his image but, rather, an inversion of value on the part of the believer. He insists, with the Psalmist, that confession must come before beauty, that God is to be worshiped "in the beauty of holiness" and not *vice versa*. No Protestant, but the most Catholic and monastic of mystics, St. John of the Cross warns in chapter 35 of *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*:

> The truly devout person directs his devotion mainly to the invisible object represented, has little need for many images, and uses those that are conformed more to the divine traits than to human ones. He brings these images—and himself through them—into conformity with the fashion and condition of the other world, not with this one. He does this so that worldly images will not be stirring his appetite and so that he will not be reminded of this world . . . His heart is not attached to these goods, and if they are taken away, his grief is slight. He seeks the living image of Christ crucified within himself, and thereby he is pleased rather to have everything taken from him and to be left with nothing.

A worldly, merely sensible appreciation of the beautiful before conversion, the concern for false worship, pleasure, and power indicated by the life and the tomb of the wicked freemason before he prayed "O Lord, be merciful to me, a poor sinner"—this kind of love for beauty Saint Augustine calls *philokalia*. It serves as an indication of the possibility of conversion, of some real but inefficacious tendency to moral goodness in fallen nature. In his *Contra Academicos*, written in the year of his conversion to his friend Romanianus, whom he longs to persuade to follow (and underwrite!) him, Augustine writes:

> Truly I was fast returning completely to my senses. And as if returning from a journey, I beheld again—I avow it—that religion which had been implanted in us in our boyhood, and which had been, as it were, interwoven with the very marrow of our being. But that religion was drawing me to itself, although I knew it not. Trembling, irresolute, and impatient, I snatched up Paul the Apostle. For, I say, surely those men could not have accomplished such great things, and could not have lived in such manner as they manifestly did live, if their writings and reasonings were in opposition to so great a good. I read the whole book with the greatest attention and care.
>
> Then philosophy's countenance, however dim the light that was cast upon it, revealed itself to me. It was such a countenance that, if I had been able to describe it to that adversary of yours (I shall not say "to you," for you have always been arduously desirous of it, although as yet unknown to you; but "to that adversary of yours," and I know not whether you are being more exercised than impeded by him) then he would forsake and relinquish the seashore resorts, the beautiful parks, the delightful and elegant banquets, the private theatrical exhibitions. In fine, he would shun everything that is strongly inciting him toward any pleasures whatsoever, and as a fond and pious lover, he would fly to the object of his admiration, the aim of his desire, and the end of his longing. For we must admit that he has a certain mental adornment, or rather the seed, as it were, of such an adornment. While it strives to sprout into true beauty, it produces twisted and misshapen leaves amid the rough thickets of vices and errors. However, it is incessantly producing leaves, and to the few who peer—insofar as it is permitted—intently and diligently into the dense entanglements, it continues to be plainly visible. Hence, that kindliness, the extreme elegance; hence, the splendor and the most orderly arrangement of all things—and the charm of a reflected beauty everywhere, adorning everything. This is commonly called *philokalia*, the love of the beautiful.

Today, this word has another, wonderfully sublimated meaning, which sums up the power of "confession before beauty" to establish the deepest love and veneration of the icon. As is so often the case, we Western Romans have to look East to rediscover the spiritual tradition of our own saints and doctors. There, where the icons, in an overwhelming profusion, are venerated with the countless kisses of the faithful, the *Philokalia* is a compilation of texts from the patristic and monastic tradition on the practice of contrition and continuous prayer. The whole collection has but one purpose: that the believer be united to God by the constant, heartfelt prayer, "O Lord Jesus, be merciful to me, a poor sinner." Not a bad way to unite my grandmother, my cousin, wicked old Masons, and me, as well as Calvinist, Carmelite, Wildean, Roman, mundane, and monastic. A smiling, bearded Oriental coenobite proffers an image to our lips, saying with Saint Paul: "And such were ye . . . "

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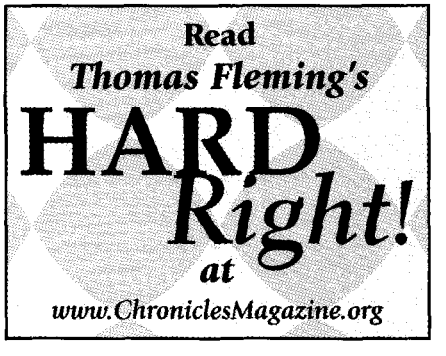

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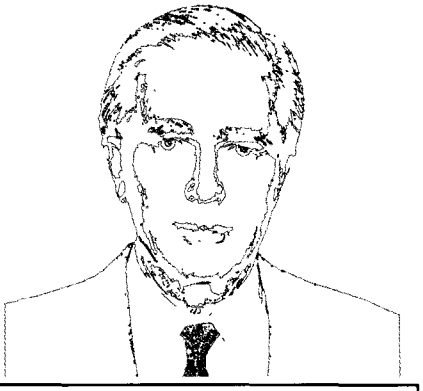
by George McCartney

Night Thoughts for the Middle-Aged



About Schmidt

Produced and distributed by
New Line Cinema
Directed by Alexander Payne
Screenplay by Alexander Payne and
Jim Taylor from Louis Begley's novel

The Quiet American

Produced by William Harberg
and Stefen Ahrenberg
Directed by Phillip Noyce
and Robert Schenkkan
Screenplay by Christopher Hampton
from Graham Greene's novel
Distributed by Miramax Films

Bulletin: Hollywood scapegrace, Jack Nicholson, reads Chronicles.

Or so several of our readers reported after seeing Alexander Payne's adaptation of Louis Begley's novel, *About Schmidt*. Needless to say, these sightings propelled yours truly into action.

En route to perform my reconnaissance at the local multiplex, I calculated the probabilities. On reflection, what had seemed at first improbable began to seem quite plausible. Nicholson, after all, has a reputation for refusing to toe anyone's line, even that of his conventionally leftist Hollywood paymasters. I recalled the flap he raised a few years ago when he declared he was against abortion, having been spared by his unmarried mother, who chose the inconvenience of bringing him into the world, to our everlasting benefit. So, why wouldn't Hollywood's premiere maverick subscribe to a journal as politically out of step as he is?

Or was it writer/director Alexander Payne who decided to cast our magazine as an objective correlative to his wayward ideology, so evident in his first commercial film, *Citizen Ruth*? This penetrating account of the abortion wars took some mild jabs at pro-life activists, but it loosed its thunder on the pro-abortion party, dramatizing its members' unswerving dedication to killing the unborn. Payne revealed the pro-choicers to be at once loonily self-righteous and calculatingly ghoulish. Furthermore, there was the rave notice we gave Payne's delightfully ruthless satire, *Election*, two years ago. How could he not be one of our more devoted readers?

As I pulled into the parking lot, I had quite convinced myself that *Chronicles* had slipped through filmdom's leftward phalanx. Payne was our man in Hollywood, and we were, at last, helping to shape the hearts and minds of the thoughtful few behind the enemy's line. It is with some chagrin, then, that I must report my reconnaissance was inconclusive. Yes, there is a magazine on Nicholson's desk, and, yes, it looks mightily like one of our issues. But its fleeting appearance makes it impossible to be certain.

I can report this, however: If it is our magazine, it is on the wrong desk. Given his character, the eponymous Schmidt could hardly be expected to read anything more demanding than the *Omaha World-Herald*.

About Schmidt is, at best, a mild satire of a late-middle-age man having his complacency bruised by some unpleasant inevitabilities: age, death, and willful offspring. While Payne dramatizes this well enough, his film lacks the nervy provocation of *Citizen Ruth* and the crackling boldness of *Election*. *Schmidt* is all too predictable. In fact, the only real surprise is how little it has to do with its source. Melding an unsold screenplay of his own with the novel, Payne has transformed Begley's Schmidt from a white-shoe New York lawyer to a dispirited actuary in Omaha. The result is an occasionally funny and sometimes moving actor's film. Whatever force there is in this account of a man awakening to his mortality comes from a cast of exceptional performers inhabiting the ordinariness of their unexceptional characters.

First, there's Nicholson himself, playing against type as Schmidt. Our Jack has called upon his current portliness to show us how Schmidt has padded himself from contact with others. At 66, he lurks within the fortress of his corpulence, peering out at the world through his fat-crenellated eyes. What he sees neither surprises nor delights him. In an hilarious pre-credit sequence, Nicholson sits at an office desk swept clean of paper, pens, and other business litter. He studies the wall clock as its minute hand creeps toward five, his face impassively gelid, his eyes lifeless, his motionless body swaddled by an ill-fitting suit that reveals every ripple of his flab. Nothing is said. Words are unnecessary. This joyless time-server is about to be released from his wage slavery. If you are over 40 and do not laugh ruefully at this scene, you are either independently wealthy or profoundly at peace with your mortal condition or, if you are obscenely lucky, both. Schmidt is fed up with it all. Of his wife, he tells us in voice-over that he often awakens at night and wonders how this pushy, foul-smelling old lady got into his house. The only time he comes alive is when his daughter, Jeanie (Hope Davis), calls. Answering the phone, he pulls his suit jacket into shape and fleetingly primps at his hair, his expression turning suddenly eager with his futile hope of pleasing the one person he still loves.

When his wife dies shortly after he retires, Schmidt is moved to apply his actuarial skills. He calculates he has nine years to live. This concentrates his mind wonderfully—on himself. He tries to persuade his thirtysomething daughter to give up her ninny of a fiancé and return to his house to take care of him "until I'm settled." She, of course, fumes at his suggestion. (Nobody fumes better than Davis.) But it is not just selfishness on his part. He simply cannot understand why she would want to marry Randall, a Denver waterbed salesman played to goofy perfection by Dermot Mulroney. You can see his point. This is a young man given to the spiritual balm of group hugging. After the funeral for Schmidt's wife, whom he met only once, Randall thoughtfully observes, "They broke the mold when they made her." Then, looking heavenward, he bellows, "We'll miss you, He-

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len!"

What is best about Payne is his cold-eyed assessment of human nature. He lets no one off the hook. When the repressed Schmidt meets Randall's effusive, aging hippie mother Roberta (the irrepressible Kathy Bates), the contrast is quite funny. In other hands, Bates would have been instructed to play her character as a touchstone of honesty and healthy nonconformity. Instead, she comes across as a monster of self-congratulation. Roberta informs Schmidt that she has always been a very sexual being whose needs have gone unsatisfied by several husbands. In no time at all, she has inveigled Schmidt into her backyard hot tub where, to his dismay, she disrobes and slips in with him, chortling, "A divorcée and a widower: I'd say that makes a good match." (I don't know about you, but I could have gone to my grave quite contentedly without having seen Bates in her altogether, nor was it ever my wish to gaze on Nicholson's bare bum.)

As in his other films, Payne applies his satire with a refreshing evenhandedness. If Schmidt's self-regarding prudence has frozen his soul, Roberta's wanton career has transformed her into a gorgon of unsatisfied longings. The organization man and the would-be earth mother stew in their respective tubs of futility.

The Quiet American also tells us of middle-age futility, but in much darker tones. This beautifully shot film of love, war, and perfidy in French Indochina follows the scheme of the Graham Greene novel on which it is based, but it simplifies its emotions and politics. Doing so, director Phillip Noyce has altered Greene's emphasis. The film suggests that there was a full moral equivalence between the deeds of the communist Vietminh and the CIA agents active in the region in the early 1950's. While Greene had little sympathy for American intervention, he did not go this far. Still, at its best, Noyce's film does justice to Greene's sobering portrait of good intentions gone horribly wrong.

Greene used a love triangle to dramatize his views of Indochina. His narrator, the fiftysomething Thomas Fowler (Michael Caine), has ensconced himself in Saigon, where he is supposed to be covering the French war against the Vietminh. This he does in a desultory manner while pursuing his twin passions for Phuong (Do Thi Hai Yen), a beautiful 20-year-old Vietnamese girl, and for the opium she administers to him nightly. Into his cozy arrangement stumbles Alden Pyle (Brendan Fraser), a Harvard-educated CIA operative pretending to be working for America's medical-aid mission. (With his big eyes and easy smile, Fraser perfectly expresses his character's innate niceness, which, paradoxically, enables him to pursue his ideals ruthlessly.) Pyle is instantly smitten with Fowler's pillow girl and, in his earnest way, decides he must make an honest woman of her, an impulse analogous to his determination to liberate the Vietnamese from, well, anything that imperils their right to enjoy democracy, American-style.

At first, Fowler is bemused by the young man's blundering brashness. But when, Pyle makes a point of discussing his intentions, he cannot help scorning the younger man's naiveté. Later, when Pyle unhesitatingly saves Fowler from a Vietminh attack, the older man pointedly sneers at his decency. Fowler shares Greene's well-known distrust of innocent goodness. At the same time, he grudgingly respects it, especially when he compares it to his own weary cynicism.

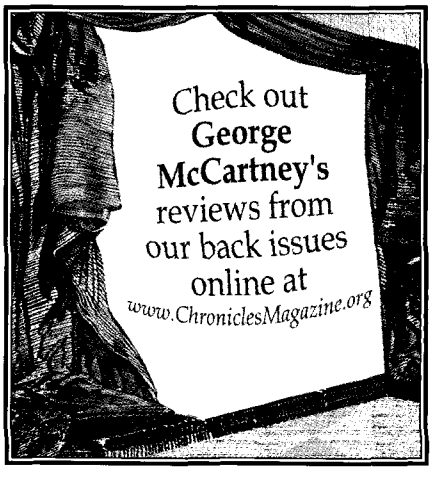
Greene, of course, meant his love triangle to mirror the struggle between competing styles of colonialism and how they deal with the colonized. The Europeans, he suggests, have no illusions about what their mission is: They have come among the Asians for their own benefit. By contrast, the American Pyle has come to save the Vietnamese from both communism and themselves. He carries around a book entitled *Dangers to Democracy* and prattles on about building a "third force" that will replace the French and supplant the communist Vietminh.

Promoting democracy, however, entails unintended hazards. Pyle retains a megalomaniacal Vietnamese general to head his third force. He supplies him with plastic explosives to combat the communists, and the vicious general promptly uses them in the streets of Saigon, maiming and killing scores of civilians. Although revolted by this unauthorized carnage, Pyle colludes in the cover story that lays the blame with the communists. He is determined to put the American plan into effect, regardless of how poorly it fits the Vietnamese.

In the aftermath of the attack, Fowler is approached by a Vietnamese friend who asks for his help. He wants the correspondent to lure Pyle into a trap so that some Vietminh agents can "talk" to him, promising they will "act as gently as the situation allows." When Fowler hesitates to betray the man who saved his life, his Vietnamese friend tries some moral suasion. "One has to take sides if one is to remain human," he observes gravely. This is a strange remark from someone working for the communist Vietminh. They never had any compunction about using terror, not only on the French but on their fellow Vietnamese, torturing and slaughtering peasants who would not comply with their demands and murdering others for the crime of owning property. Fowler's decision settles what kind of man he is. As for Pyle, Greene was uncannily prescient: His type represents the vanguard of the likes of Robert McNamara, McGeorge Bundy, and others in John F. Kennedy's retinue. Greene was right: The ruthless innocence of America's best and brightest unleashed havoc in Southeast Asia.

While Noyce has followed Greene in implicating the communists in various acts of terror and treachery, he has most of it offscreen. The attack carried out with American-supplied explosives is, on the other hand, depicted in bloody and prolonged close-ups. Many will leave the theater thinking the communists constituted a relatively decent indigenous movement forced to use extreme measures to ward off the inexcusably brutal French and Americans. To those, I would recommend the remedy that I have had occasion to apply: Talk to a few Vietnamese in America. Twenty-five years after fleeing Uncle Ho's workers' paradise, they still shudder at the horrors they witnessed in their homeland after we abandoned them.

My reservations notwithstanding, I strongly urge you to see this film. While you are at it, read the novel. Greene's story serves as a potent vaccination against the contagion of war fever that is spreading in our land. c



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by Humpty Dumpty

By Their Clichés, You Shall Know Them

At least since September 11, the buzzphrase for every investigation has been "connect the dots." Republicans were highly imaginative in connecting the dots between Afghanistan and Al Qaeda, Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden, while Democrats preferred connecting the dots between Enron executives and the Bush administration. Donald Rumsfeld, who has raised this kind of political gibberish to high art, told Bob Schieffer on *Face the Nation*:

> I was musing over the fact that there are so many books that have been written—"Why England Slept," Pearl Harbor, what happened, why didn't we know? Right now on Capitol Hill, the members of the House and the Senate are trying to—are looking, having investigations on September 11th of last year, and trying to connect the dots, as they say, trying to piece together what might have been known, and why didn't we know it, and why weren't we able to connect the dots? What the president is saying very simply to the world is let's look at the dots today. Our task is not to connect—connect the dots as to why England slept, or what happened with Pearl Harbor, or what happened on September 11th only. Our task is to connect the dots before the fact, and—and see if we can't behave in a way that there won't be books written about why we slept, or what happened.

To "connect the dots before the fact," in case you have not been able to figure it out, means passing *a priori* judgments on the Iraq-Al Qaeda connection without supplying any facts whatsoever.

"Connect the dots" seems to have replaced "pieces of the puzzle" as the paranoid metaphor of choice and bids fair to supplant even "smoking gun." What makes it so attractive is the tacit assumption that there must be a preset pattern, that the investigator's only task is to go from point to point in the right sequence to come up with the predetermined picture.

After all, the search for "the smoking gun" may prove to be fruitless, if no crime has been committed. Putting together a puzzle of hundreds of pieces may require hours, and the picture, often quite complicated, will be incomplete if some of the pieces (as the cliché often suggests) are missing, but in the children's game of Connect the Dots, there is no room for doubt. One person (in my day, it was usually another child) imagines an iconic image and outlines it in dots, and it is the child's duty to connect them up to discover the outline of an elephant or the face of Abraham Lincoln.

This simplicity appeals to children. Adults are supposed to realize that reality is never so simple, that the divine Puzzle Master has created a richly textured universe that can rarely be explained in one-dimensional terms. Ike was probably not a commie; the Frankfurt School did not single-handedly destroy Western civilization; Bill Clinton was not planning a *coup d'état*; poverty cannot usually be explained by either the greed of plutocrats or the laziness of social inferiors.

To think that America's problems in the Middle East can be explained by any simple connecting of dots is as infantile as the phrase itself, and the popularity of this expression is one more indication—as if we needed it—of the growing infantilism of the American people and their leaders.

The evidence is all around us, especially in the elite classes. Read or listen to speeches of American statesmen from before World War II, and you will hear forceful, articulate men, not afraid to speak plainly, who studded their speeches with references to the Scriptures and to American history. Listen to any senator, cabinet member, or president of the past ten years, and you will think you have entered into a school for learning-disabled children. The two Bushes may be excused on the grounds of hereditary dyslexia, but how do we explain away the rest of them?

The infantilism comes out very strongly in the choice of slang expressions and the use of allusions to pop culture. Where politicians once quoted Shakespeare, the Bible, Thomas Jefferson, and Mark Twain, they now refer to Disney cartoons, game shows, movies, and sitcoms. Journalists are even worse. The only frame of reference for journalists under 40 seems to be pop music, sports, and TV shows. And if we descend the cultural scale, the situation gets even more desperate: If comic writers had to give up all references to Michael Jackson and Jennifer Lopez, they would go on unemployment.

Just in case you might be tempted to take the American pundit-class seriously, consider: This is the country where actresses who play farm wives in films are invited to testify in Congress on the farm crisis, where a p.r. hack like Lucianne Goldberg (to say nothing of her son) or a fashion-plate like Arianna Huffington can gain a respectful hearing, where political activists and speechwriters (James Carville, Paul Begala, Tony Snow, Cal Thomas) pretend to be "journalists" on talk shows. ("I'm not a journalist, but I play one on TV.")

Uneducated people have always been, well, uneducated, but, in the old days, they did have a rich storehouse of proverbs, folktales, and traditional lore. A proletariat has nothing but consumer culture and Madison Avenue to fall back on. Unfortunately, that proletariat now includes the American ruling class, which can only express its thoughts in simple sentences, because all of its thoughts are simple, and which reveals, in its reliance upon infantile clichés, an entirely infantile view of the world. c

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Pat Buchanan

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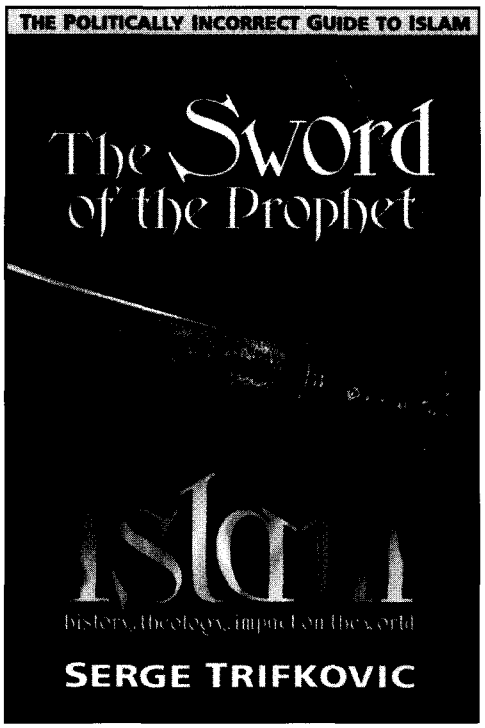

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